A piece of land is a piece of gold: gentrification, value, and material life

A piece of land is a piece of gold

Gentrification, value, and material life

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Aaron Vansintjan
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Abstract

The Vietnamese saying, *tấc đất tấc vàng*, 'a piece of land is a piece of gold', used to mean that if you have a piece of land, it would always provide you with enough food to eat. Today, it means that if you own land in the city, you will be rich. These two meanings—land as fertile and abundant, land as a source of profit—point to the contradiction of value in an age of hyper-accelerated real estate speculation. Communities that fight for green parks or community gardens, making their neighbourhood greener and safer, may get displaced as their neighbourhood increases in value—value that they helped to create. What drives this paradox, where people's everyday activities may lead to real estate profits, which in turn erodes the community of long-term residents? To answer this question, this study explores how people respond to gentrification in the day-to-day—what is here called 'material life.' Drawing on research in the cities of Hanoi and Montreal, narrated through people's foodways—the material and social use of food—I show how poor people facing gentrification turn to material life to survive and resist the process. Gentrification, even if it does not lead to direct displacement, may lead to 'life displacement'—which cuts across social-ecological relations. I trace how urban elites take advantage of this material life, drawing from community wealth to brand the neighbourhood. I find that the two-faced nature of material life under gentrification—its fecundity and its potential for return on investment—is both a site of extraction and new forms of struggle. Drawing on subaltern urbanism, political ecology, urban geography, and value theory, I argue that gentrification can be understood as a value conflict, where different forms of wealth are struggled over and ultimately sequestered into capitalist value.

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Introduction

Gentrification and material life

[W]e should not waste a centimetre of land. We should treasure a centimetre of land like a centimetre of gold.

Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh, in the first issue of the communist agricultural journal, *Tấc Đất Tấc Vàng* [A piece of land is a piece of gold], 1945

It used to be that land was everywhere and you could ask your neighbour for a piece of it. But then it became *tấc đất tấc vàng*. Now you couldn't dream of asking your neighbour for land.

Bà Đào, a Hanoi resident, 2017, personal interview

In the city, it's not wrong to say that *tấc đất tấc vàng*. There is concrete everywhere; it took a lot of effort for me to find a plot of undeveloped land to get some soil for gardening. But in the countryside, soil is everywhere.

Nguyễn Duy Khánh, a Hanoi resident interviewed by the newspaper *Real Times*, 2018

Look down! Pick up the earth, or jab your fingernails into the concrete. It is real and it is yours, if you want it.

LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), 1966

Photo 1 Growing vegetables in an inch of soil, next to a highway in Hanoi

The Vietnamese saying, *tấc đất tấc vàng,* can be translated as 'a piece of land is a piece of gold.'[1] In the last half-century, the saying has undergone several changes in meaning. In one meaning—the more traditional one—it refers to the idea that land is abundant. In Feudal and colonial Vietnam, not everyone had access to land. But if you have just a piece of it, you can sustain yourself in the face of hardship. The comparison suggests land's immeasurable worth and fecundity. It was this use of the term that Ho Chi Minh sought to articulate when, in 1945, in the first issue of the communist agronomy journal, *Tấc đất tấc vàng*, he urged the Vietnamese to grow food everywhere (Son, 2015).[2] Following a period of collectivisation of land under the communist regime, Vietnam passed its first 'Land Law' in 1993: people could now buy and sell land-use titles.[3] This was in tandem with a general move toward liberalisation of the economy through a series of reforms and 'renewal' of communist

[1] *Tấc* is a pre-colonial Vietnamese measurement, referring roughly to the length of a hand, but, like the English word 'inch,' is also commonly used to refer to a small piece of something. *Đất* means both 'land' and 'soil.' A perhaps a more literal translation would then be 'An inch of soil is an inch of gold.'
[2] Thanks to Tran True Minh for her research on this subject.
[3] During the state communist land reform period, roughly from 1945 to 1989, the state became the de facto owner of all land. Today, the state continues to own all land, and people can only own land-use titles. See Appendix G.

doctrine (*Đổi Mới*). It suddenly became possible to invest in and speculate on land titles. In this new context, the saying took another turn: a plot of land in the city was worth its weight in gold; if you have land, you are rich. So, a young Vietnamese person might tell you that the saying means you will be rich if you have the deed to a piece of land, especially if it's in the city. An older person might say that 'gold' refers to the natural abundance of the land: if you have it, you can grow anything on it, it's invaluable.

The story of *tấc đất tấc vàng* reflects the contradictory role of land in the age of a highly accelerated and speculative real estate market. The competing meanings represent the two-faced nature of gentrification: just as property in a neighbourhood appreciates in value, it displaces other, diverse values, or translates them into profit. The saying represents the troubled relationship between soil and real estate, fecundity of the earth and wealth. Gentrification is defined as upscaling of an urban area, made possible by capital investment and real estate development, and often resulting in displacement of original residents (Clark, 2005). Gentrification is today both globalising, and greening. Around the world, we are seeing remarkably similar patterns of upscaling, renewal, and displacement. Researchers call this 'planetary gentrification', where urban development strategies by elite circulate globally, but have unique, context-dependent outcomes (Lees *et al.*, 2016). According to a growing body of comparative research, gentrification has become a leading component of urbanisation and displacement (Lees *et al.,* 2015)—though care is needed not to apply a theory derived in the West (gentrification) unreflectively on global contexts (Maloutas, 2012; Ghertner, 2015; Tang, 2017). Furthermore, increasingly, gentrification projects are packaged with 'green' branding such as parks, sustainable architecture, urban gardening, and sustainable lifestyle options (Anguelovski *et al.,* 2018a; Wachsmuth and Angelo, 2018). Researchers have identified a dynamic where local residents may fight for more amenities, or create these themselves, but it is precisely these amenities which then attract investment and development in the neighbourhood—eventually, and paradoxically, leading to displacement of poor, and often racialised, residents (Checker, 2011; Curran and Hamilton, 2012). This is now called ecological or green gentrification, where investment in a neighbourhood is linked to how sustainable it is deemed to be. However, while gentrification research is increasingly taking a global perspective, research on green gentrification outside of

North America and Europe, which studies the interface of community wealth and gentrification, is still lacking (for an exception, see Anguelovski, 2014).

In this study, I explore gentrification as a site of value conflicts: where different people, with different levels of power in society, struggle over which values are more important—at the level of everyday life. In every gentrifying neighbourhood, there is a life that goes on between the bricks, behind the census data and the rising real estate prices. It gets built up through day-to-day decisions and interactions, it fosters relationships and creates wealth—essential for people's survival. But it's precisely that life that gets put in danger when the rent goes up. I aim to explore the role of *material life* in gentrification. Material life is the day-to-day activity and stuff that sustains life. Or, as Fernand Braudel calls it, 'that lowest stratum of the non-economy, the soil into which capitalism thrusts its roots but which it can never really penetrate' (1979: 229-230). This research project is an attempt to understand that life, and how that life then gets affected and transformed by gentrification, and how it vitalises resistance to the process.

I approach material life through the lens of *foodways*—the food spaces, cultures, and relationships that residents rely on (Lawrance & de la Peña, 2013; Alkon *et al.,* 2013). Foodways incorporate the social, cultural, and material meanings and needs that structure daily life. From a foodways perspective, food spaces aren't limited to supermarkets, dining rooms, or restaurants, but, for the urban poor, they also include vacant land to garden, park benches to sit on, community festivals, kitchens, stoops, and cemeteries. In this way, food was a lens to explore much more than food: how gentrification affects the everyday life of a neighbourhood. Food is political: though many people might not have much to say about gentrification, anyone can talk about where they eat and what they eat and how that has changed or been disrupted over time. As such, studying foodways of the gentrified[4] was a productive way to conduct comparative research on the effects of gentrification across different cities. This meant observing how the influx of capital affected the foodways and food spaces of low-income residents in the neighborhoods I studied, and how people responded to these changes in their daily lives.

[4] Here I use the term 'gentrified' to refer to incumbent residents of a gentrifying neighbourhood, who are often characterised as coming from a working class background, compared to the new residents. Likewise, I use 'gentrifiers' to refer to the new residents.

Asking this question also requires exploring two related dynamics: those of how value is generated and/or destroyed through gentrification, and how the material life of residents engages with, subverts, or bypasses hegemonic structures of power. *Value* is what is deemed good by a society—an appraisal that is contested by different people and a constant site of conflict and collaboration. I was interested in how people created value through their day-to-day activities such as where they buy or grow food or the places they socialise and how these values are then translated and brought into conflict when an area appreciates in monetary value. *Hegemony* is the dominant system of power, which includes state and private institutions but also extends to the way that these systems of power are replicated through social institutions, dominant discourse, and daily life (Gramsci, 1971). Thus, in observing how foodways are formed and affected during gentrification, I also sought to observe how dominant systems of power and elite actors (civil society, government regulations, local state representatives, real estate agents) engage with material life, take advantage of it, or seek to suppress it—and, in turn, how people seek to subvert those systems of power.

Another interest that drove this research was, now that gentrification is increasingly recognised as a global phenomenon, how reliance on material life varies in how people respond to gentrification in different contexts. *Comparative urbanism* is a research approach developed to generate new theories not derived from Western case studies but through a cosmopolitan perspective—and thus seemed useful to explore how people's foodways responses differ in a Western and non-Western context. The value of this approach is that it enables the cross-pollination of different theories, from different worldviews and perspectives, challenging hegemonic ways of seeing. In so doing, it makes space for new and challenging insights.

In sum, while there is growing interest in both global gentrification and ecological gentrification, there is little research that explores ecological gentrification dynamics across Global North and South contexts. Further, the question of how residents create wealth and how this is contested or enrolled in the gentrification process remains under-explored in gentrification research. This study seeks to address these gaps through a comparative study of the foodways of gentrified residents in Montreal, Canada, and Hanoi, Vietnam. While *comparative urbanism* and *foodways* were the lens through which I sought to observe these dynamics and linked my research with existing literature on gentrification, *material life*, *value*, and *hegemony* constitute the

three key conceptual approaches in my research and guide my research questions. I further explore these concepts in Chapter 2. Following from these definitions, my main research questions are:

- How are poor people's foodways and their material life more broadly transformed in gentrification, what values do people ascribe to these practices, and how do they in turn lead to political action in response to gentrification? (Chapters 5 and 6)
- How do hegemonic structures affect poor people's foodways, and how do they value, translate, conflict with, and have an impact on material life more broadly through gentrification? (Chapter 7)
- How do these dynamics vary across dissimilar contexts? Specifically, what role do different hegemonic regimes have in shaping gentrification's effect on material life? (Chapters 5, 6, and 7)

The sites of Montreal and Hanoi were chosen as case studies because they are markedly different: one is firmly in what is often called the Global North, and the other, in the South.[5] Montreal features a strong welfare system, formalised labour, a liberal democracy, and a large civil society (Esping-Andersen, 1989); Hanoi has a relatively weak welfare system, a large informal labour sector, a liberalised post-communist state, and very small presence of civil society (Kerkvliet, 2001). Yet, Montreal and Hanoi are linked in that they are both experiencing some form of gentrification. Thus, my research follows a 'most-similar, most-different' analytic approach (Yin, 2013); the significant differences in both case studies, and smaller set of commonalities between them, make them well-suited for an exploratory research project on how gentrification affects the material life, and in particular the foodways, of disadvantaged residents.

In my research, I was inspired by what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui calls a 'peripheral perspective' (Gago, 2016), where a passer-by, guided by theoretical interests, tries to take in their surroundings corporeally. This is the method of the

[5] In this thesis, I use the imperfect terms Global North and South to characterise politically and economically dominant countries versus relatively poor, unevenly developed countries. I retain use of Western and non-Western to distinguish a culturally and socially hegemonic context, which doesn't always map on to Global North and Global South. Therefore, when I use the terms 'Western' and 'non-Western', in the text, I am referring to a cultural/hegemonic dominance in terms of forms of knowledge and ways of seeing, while the terms 'Global North' and 'Global South' are used rather to refer to differences in material, economic, and political economic conditions.

flâneur and the dérive, of collage and understanding through juxtaposition. A further component of the methodology was research collaboration. For my field work, I collaborated with Nguyen Hong Van in Hanoi, Lucie Le in Montreal, and, near the end, Tran True Minh in Hanoi again. These collaborations were essential to the process of developing research directions, translating the worlds I encountered, and testing analytical observations.[6] The thesis is presented through collage: a mix of narrative, multi-media (photography, news clippings, conversations), and theoretical analysis. This mix of narrative and more traditional academic structure was necessary to integrate theoretical analysis with the vital reality of people's lives. I take both a 'corporeal' approach (Gago, 2016)—highlighting my own participation and position in the research—and a 'defamiliarising' approach (Mbembe and Nutall, 2004), trying to put aside and interrogate prior assumptions or hierarchies between case sites.

The research contributes primarily and most centrally to gentrification studies, by focusing on the question of how material life contributes to the valorisation of an area. However, it also engages with, and advances, the fields of urban political ecology, critical urban studies, subaltern urbanism, and comparative urbanism. By discussing the role of everyday strategies in challenging or reinforcing hegemony in urban space, and by comparing these dynamics across case studies, the dissertation mobilises and responds to many areas of concern for urbanists. In particular, it interrogates the shape and role of what constitutes *the political* in an age of accelerated real estate speculation and investment.

Summary and outline of the dissertation

Gentrification has become generalised as a global strategy of investment and accumulation. This development calls for more research that can productively compare how gentrification affects the day-to-day lives of low-income and marginalised groups across the world, and how poor people respond to the experience of living in a quickly upscaled environment.[7] At the same time, the arrival of green

[6] As I explain more in Chapter 3, I switch between 'we' and 'I' to differentiate the work I did with Van, Lucie, and Minh, and the work I did by myself.

[7] Here, I use the terms 'poor people', 'low income', and 'marginalised' more broadly to refer to those historically and economically excluded. The term 'working class' generally refers to people who primarily rely on wage labour for survival. However, around the world, marginalised groups differ greatly in terms of level of subsistence and informal labour, as well as either working class or peasant

gentrification as a specific strategy of profit-seeking requires that we better understand how community wealth and 'green' amenities built by low-income groups can become translated into monetary profit. Yet, there is little research on green gentrification outside of North America or Europe. The approach of comparative urbanism is well placed to respond to these gaps, offering ways to conceptualise comparison across difference and de-centring Euro-American urban theory (McFarlane, 2010; Robinson, 2011). The aim of this research project is thus to explore what role material life has in gentrification, how it is structured by hegemonic institutions, how it becomes translated into capitalist value, and what commonalities exist in this process across dissimilar contexts of urban development, political systems, and even gentrification dynamics. In order to explore how material life is embedded in and translated by hegemonic structures, I used a foodways approach, which has the capacity to link the social and material aspects of everyday life. In order to see material life, I engaged in my case study sites *corporeally*, as a researcher passing through yet physically engaged.

In the following, I describe how I approach this research question in each chapter of my dissertation. In Chapter 1, I focus on how the question of value has been approached in gentrification studies. My central aim is to explore the paradox of how improvements put in place by residents may eventually displace them. I use this question as an opportunity to link different approaches to gentrification conceptually, from research on the role of social capital in driving gentrification, to studies on the links between transit, infrastructure, greening, and gentrification. I argue that the process by which an area becomes valorised is highly qualitative, determined by many dynamics such as global policy circulation or the built environment. The literature on gentrification and value suggests that there is a clear opportunity to study on-the-ground dynamics of how residents' activity becomes entangled with gentrification processes, and to further explore the role that everyday activities and their valuation has in either resisting or facilitating gentrification. Further, given that gentrification is continuing to be a global phenomenon, there is room for more research that extends the study of ecological gentrification to non-Western contexts, in order to explore how, and to what extent, processes of value translation and conflicts may vary.

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cultures. For this reason, I use the term working class to also describe a culture and way of life that is shaped around highly formalised wage labour, and largely lacks reliance on subsistance labour.

This leads me to the question of what kind of theoretical framework can be applied to study a Western and non-Western context comparatively. In Chapter 2, I begin with outlining some challenges posed by subaltern urbanism. I argue that the concepts of *material life*, *hegemony*, and *value* respond to these challenges and allow me to take an on-the-ground approach to gentrification while accounting for power dynamics that shape the day-to-day. At the same time, they are broad enough to compare different contexts through identifying cross-cutting similarities. I outline different theories of value which range from what I call 'capitalocentric value theories'—neoclassical, classical, and Marxist—to what I call 'pluralist value theories'—from anthropological, post-colonial, and ecological economics perspectives. I argue for an 'ambidextrous value theory', which draws from both capitalocentric and pluralist approaches, which would be more able to observe material life and hegemonic structures across dissimilar contexts.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I focus on research design and methodology, and introduce my case studies. In Chapter 3, I describe what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui calls 'peripheral research' and outline how it informed my research. Following this, I describe the logic that went into my case study selection, methods, and data analysis. Finally, I discuss the validity, reliability, and limitations of my methods and data analysis. In Chapter 4, I present the two case studies of Montreal and Hanoi, describing their political economic contexts, the history of urban development and gentrification, and each neighbourhood. Montreal is a 'classic' case of gentrification while in Hanoi there has been little research on gentrification. In both cases, I argue, a foodways approach is well-suited to better understand the gentrification dynamics at play. In the neighbourhoods I studied in both cities, there remain many long-term residents, and direct, physical, displacement is not the most prominent dynamic resulting from gentrification. Rather, gentrification seems to be affecting people's livelihoods and cultural and social spaces—a process of indirect displacement.

In Chapter 5, I begin the comparative work through the use of narratives. I show how foodways have transformed through gentrification, and how people respond through individual and household food strategies, which in turn become political. My findings suggest that gentrification can involve 'life displacement', rather than direct, physical displacement. 'Life displacement' spans social, cultural, and ecological displacement caused by gentrification. Even if people are not forced to physically

move, and even if gentrification is often ambiguous for many incumbent residents, I find that aspects of material life are clearly displaced through the process, resulting in socio-ecological disruption. However, I also show how it is at the level of material life that people find space for responding to and, ultimately, resisting the process.

While Chapter 5 focuses on the displacement caused by gentrification, Chapter 6 zooms in on those material life practices and teases apart the kinds of values that are implicated in them, and in many ways arise from them. I find that people act through values such as a sense of belonging, mutual aid, pride in work, abundance in the face of limitations, and spirituality. Values are articulated in contrast to the changes that are occurring in people's lives through the development process. In turn, it is these values, based on commoning (Linebaugh, 2008), and weapons of the weak (Scott, 1985), that catalyse political action. Going back to the literature on planetary gentrification and subaltern urbanism, I argue that observing the impacts of gentrification from the perspective of material life highlights that subaltern strategies are not just worth engaging with in highly informal economies such as in Vietnam, but should be part of research on gentrification in formalised economies such as Canada, as well. I finish the chapter by arguing that a focus on material life shows how gentrification continues to be at the intersection between city and country, subsistence and enclosure, formality and informality—both in non-Western and Western contexts.

In chapter 7, I get to the central question of my thesis—the relationship between material life and value in gentrification. To do so, I highlight how existing social and political institutions shaped people's responses to gentrification. This includes civil society, the state, and the real estate industry. I show how, through tactics of branding, taking advantage of social capital, and elite coalitions, material life became *sequestered* by capital and the state. I use sequestration in its multiple definitions: material life is sometimes hidden away, and sometimes appropriated through force, legal, or institutionalised claims. Sequestration involves both the *un*-seeing of material life, just as it appropriates it when convenient. I divide the chapter into five forms of sequestration: regulation and management, translation, destruction, expropriation/dispossession, and creation. I highlight the central role that civil society has in manufacturing consent to gentrification in both cities—suggesting that a Gramscian approach to studying gentrification comparatively can be especially

productive. This chapter also illustrates how value, material life, and hegemony interact and how community wealth becomes expropriated through gentrification.

In Chapter 8, I bring together my findings in a broader analysis. After summarising each chapter, I propose a schema for how material life may relate to capitalist value through gentrification, where capital, material life, hegemonic values, and counter-hegemonic values draw on each other and come into conflict. I thus argue that gentrification can fruitfully be understood as a value conflict.

Chapter 1

Value and gentrification: an unfinished puzzle

In a case study of gentrification in Harlem, New York City, Melissa Checker (2011) tells us of a community organisation, the West Harlem Environmental Action Coalition (WE ACT), which had fought, and won, campaigns against polluting infrastructure projects in Harlem. Eventually, the organisation switched to campaigns for *more* amenities, such as parks, health care, and housing. However, this led to trouble as WE ACT found themselves in the position of helping to compromise and manage Harlem's gentrification process, trying to fight off luxury housing proposals while seeking money to create green spaces and public walkways. As Checker notes, 'Clearly, WE ACT's efforts did not cause real estate developers to designate Harlem for gentrification, but they did boost the area's attractiveness to those developers' (Ibid., 220). She further explains: 'the efforts of environmental justice activists to improve their neighbourhoods (i.e. the removal of environmental burdens and the installation of environmental benefits) *now help those neighbourhoods attract an influx of affluent residents*' (Ibid., 212, my italics).

As this example illustrates, the central puzzle of this research—how gentrification relates to material life—is fundamentally also a question of value. What happens when a community facing gentrification creates wealth through activism or even regular, daily material and social interactions? Does that wealth appreciate the value of the neighbourhood? Or is it simply destroyed? What are the ways by which developers and investors translate community wealth into capital? In this work, I aim to explore the point at which material life becomes seen as valuable or worthless—when a piece of land becomes gold, or is simply just dirt.

To approach this research question, however, it is first necessary to understand how value has been studied within gentrification research thus far. In this chapter, I review the literature on value and gentrification. I start with two standard explanations of gentrification: 'supply-side' and 'demand-side'. The former revolves around the question of how value is generated through the institution of rent and its relationship

to global flows of capital, while the latter revolves around the role of cultural and consumer behaviour in making neighbourhoods more desirable places to live—and thus contributing to the valorisation of certain urban areas. I highlight how the apparent globalisation of gentrification as a leading strategy of urban development troubles the focus on Western-derived theories of gentrification and value, both grounded in supply-side and demand-side approaches. Moving on, I suggest that more contemporary literature on the role of material changes (environmental, food access, mobility, etc.) in the valuation of an area can add to our understanding of value in gentrification. Here I point to ecological gentrification literature in particular,[8] which has productively engaged with questions of how aspects of material life and valorisation relate to each other. However, given that there is still an absence of this kind of research conducted in non-European or North American contexts, there is opportunity to explore these dynamics further from a comparative perspective.

The drivers of gentrification: supply-side and demand-side

The word 'gentrification' is notoriously hard to define. Often understood as the influx of middle-income homeowners into previously working-class neighbourhoods in urban centres, it is now being used to describe very different contexts, from the renewal of rural towns (Phillips, 1993) to the construction of gated communities (Lees *et al.* 2015). Unmoored from its original coinage to describe the changes Ruth Glass was seeing in Islington, London (Glass 1964), 'gentrification' has become global. Researchers now ask, does the word's explosion into mainstream vocabulary water it down, 'stretching' it beyond its original meaning (Maloutas, 2012)—and thereby obscuring very different processes taking place?

Responding to this challenge, some have advocated for holding on to the concept, but broadening its definition. In this spirit, Eric Clark has defined gentrification as:

> a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital (Clark 2005: 258).

[8] The terms ecological/green/environmental gentrification are often used interchangeably in this subfield of research. In this study, I use the term 'ecological' as it tends to describe both perceptions of what is green and the material relations between gentrified, gentrifiers, and their environment. In contrast, the terms 'green' and 'environmental' do not as accurately evoke the co-constitutive role that human-ecosystem relations may have in this process.

In other words, it involves *class relations*, a changed *urban landscape*, and the influx of *capital.* Of course, from the very beginning the word had those connotations, which was, perhaps, why some people are so reluctant to use it. Instead, many prefer to use more neutral, less politically laden words like 'renewal', 'regeneration', 'beautification', or 'upgrading.' What distinguishes the word gentrification from these descriptors is the recognition that this is a highly classed (and often racialised) process, where the owners of capital and therefore of the profits are comprised of a distinct group of people—usually developers, investors, politicians, and real estate agents (Slater, 2006). The flip side of this is also that gentrification is a form of class conflict: the uneven ownership of capital tends to result in the displacement of those who do not own capital—in this case real estate. However, this is not necessarily always the case, as Eric Clark emphasises: gentrification, even if it is highly classed, does not necessarily have to involve direct displacement or class struggle (Clark, 2005). In this work, I rely on Clark's definition of gentrification, stressing the classed character of gentrification especially while putting less emphasis on *where* it occurs (e.g. the inner city versus the countryside), whether it causes physical displacement or not, or whether it is largely negative or positive—debates which are only secondary to this broadened definition of the process.

Supply-side explanations

A question underlying this definition of gentrification, then, is how it is that capital becomes invested in the built environment in the first place. What about urban renewal or upgrading is so profitable to the investor? It was this question that drove the supply-side approach to gentrification. Starting in the 1970s, the growing predominance of gentrification in inner cities in the West seemed to contradict predominant neoclassical explanations for urban development. Geographers started seeing similar patterns play out in New York, where suburbanites began 'back-to-the-city' movements and bought up old brownstones in the Lower East Side and Brooklyn (Smith, 1979). Economic models based on ideas of equilibrium between supply and demand made it seem like it was only natural for cities, and wealth, to expand outward, while poverty would be concentrated in the centre. These models didn't account for why certain inner city areas gentrified. To explain this process, Neil Smith drew from Marxist theory to develop what's called the 'rent gap'—the gap between

possible return on investment (potential ground rent) and the current return on investment on the land (capitalised ground rent; Smith, 1987). For example, if an apartment building in a poor neighbourhood provides comparatively little per month on rent (capitalised ground rent), then a landlord won't find it worthwhile to renovate or repair, and will seek to keep all overhead costs down. However, if the neighbourhood appreciates in value, the landlord will be able to either start renovating the units and raising the rent, or sell the building to someone who has the capital to invest in renovations (potential ground rent). The rent gap is the potential profit on a plot of land, and the larger the gap, the more likely it is that gentrification would take place. On a neighbourhood scale, the lower the value of an area, the more potential profit can be made once capital investment is facilitated (through rezoning, new infrastructure, etc.). But, returns on investment at some point level out, which starts the process of disinvestment again. Thus, perceived return on investment of an urban area is a significant driver, and predictor, of both gentrification and ghettoisation—and it takes a form that looks a bit like a microcosm of uneven development at a global scale (Smith, 1982; Smith, 2010; see Chapter 2).

The value of the rent gap theory

There are several issues with the rent gap theory. First, there is a difference between describing the rent gap at the level of a single plot and at the neighbourhood level (Hammel, 1999). While a single plot might have a high rent gap, potential profits will be stymied if, for example, the area as a whole has a poor reputation, or is not as accessible by public transport as other areas. And, it's at this level that it becomes difficult to measure—because these factors are all very qualitative, having to do with their status, quality, accessibility, and so on (e.g. see Phe and Wakely, 2000). Thus, the rent gap may describe the logic of developers and investors, but cannot itself explain how and when this moment of qualitative shift in the potential ground rent occurs.

This issue points to the problem of how we understand the creation of value. To what extent is the rent gap (a quantitatively measurable phenomenon) driven by qualitative phenomena, such as changes in the use-value of a neighbourhood, and different kinds of wealth creation by different groups? It is clear that the rent gap has to be contextualised within an understanding of neighbourhood change to become a

useful model for predicting or describing gentrification. That is to say, without assessing these qualitative, contingent variables at play, the rent gap theory cannot, by itself, determine the likelihood of a neighbourhood 'flipping'—it can only explain it after the fact.

A second question is whether the rent gap actually translates across contexts. Because the theory emphasises landlords as the right-holders to land, it may not be able to describe different contexts such as communist and post-communist countries (e.g. Sýkora, 1993; 2004). In these cases, there was an absence of a 'capitalised ground rent' when the state owned all land—and when a real estate market was created in the post-communist liberalisation phase, it was more the existing functions and use-value that drove the potential return on investment and speculation. To distinguish this process from the rent gap, Sýkora calls this the 'functional gap' (1993). Differences also exist in Western countries, where new terms like the 'value gap' (where rented flats will be sold to owner-occupants, thus making the term 'rent' more confusing—here the terms value and rent are not to be confused with their Marxist definitions; Hamnett and Randolph, 1986) and the 'Atlantic gap' (where different institutions and property regimes between New York and London lead to differences in the process of gentrification; Lees, 1994) have been coined to illustrate how different the process can be around the world. As Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly note,

> The basic processes at the heart of the rent gap are expressed differently in the urban landscape, depending upon the kinds of rules governing a specific property market. Zoning regulations, tax rates for different land uses, tax incentives designed to encourage redevelopment, and other factors all help to shape the way devalorisation works in a particular city, in a particular regional and national context. (Lees et al., 2008: 70)

This is today brought further in the literature on global gentrification, as I describe below. On the one hand, some have claimed that the theory of the rent gap is no longer useful in divergent contexts (Maloutas, 2012). Others, however, claim that the rent gap remains an important lens through which to understand uneven urban development around the world (Slater, 2017). Scholars continue to use the rent gap in widely different site studies (e.g. Lopez-Morales, 2011; Jou et al., 2014). It is particularly in its theorisation along with the theory of uneven development that the rent gap helps to explain the 'global rent gaps' (Slater, 2017) and the role of

'planetary gentrification' (Lees *et al.*, 2016) in the 'spatial fixing' of capital surplus through real estate investments globally (Harvey, 2006).

Regardless of the difficulty of measuring the rent gap, and its incomplete explanation of the qualitative factors that drive the valorisation of an area, it points to how gentrification must be understood in the context of the process of valorisation and devalorisation within capitalism. It shifts the focus from 'consumers' to 'producers'—that is, to politicians, landlords, developers, real estate agents, and the state. And, through being contextualised within the wider framework of Marxist economics, it also highlights that this is a process that takes place at different scales—on a single plot, but also at the neighbourhood, municipal, and global level. In other words, we can't divorce gentrification from the institutions of rent, global finance, and flows of investment and value-creation and destruction in the capitalist world-system. Nevertheless, though the supply-side approach is certainly valuable, a demand-side approach is still useful for understanding the valorisation process within gentrification, as I explain below.

Demand-side explanations

The 'supply-side' explanation of gentrification does not put much emphasis on the role that consumers, cultural shifts, and particular economic contexts have in gentrification. Parallel to Neil Smith's development of the 'rent gap' theory, other researchers began to explore what is called the 'demand-side' approach to gentrification. In the following, I introduce this approach, highlighting in particular the research that explored how certain groups participated in the valorisation of urban spaces.

Structural economic changes leading to shifts in consumer demands

Shifting our perspective from New York City, David Ley, through extensive analysis of census data in Canadian cities, found that much of their gentrification was due to the emergence of a new class (Ley, 1986). Young urban professionals, moving from the suburbs to the city, also sought work in the emerging cultural sectors such as advertising and information technology. The formation of this 'cultural new class' (Ley, 1996), argued Ley, was in great part driven by the move to post-industrial

economies in Western countries following globalisation, which then led to the wholesale restructuring of Western cities. According to Ley, and Chris Hamnett after him, this new class of college-educated residents developed its own markers of taste and aesthetics, and desired a shift from suburban living to a more 'urban' or 'progressive' experience of diversity (Ley, 1986; 1996; Hamnett 1994). This expanding group of new managerial workers became the central force in the creation of new housing markets—in a way that could not be explained by an analysis of property regimes and the drive for profit alone. From this perspective, 'gentrification is a product of the transformation of western cities from manufacturing centres to centres of business services and the creative and cultural industries, where associated changes to the occupational and income structure produce an expanding middle class that has replaced (not displaced) the industrial working class in desirable inner city areas' (Lees et al., 2008: 93).

Loft living: Translation of cultural wealth into capitalist value

Beyond these economic and demographic contexts, this literature also sought to explain why members of this new class sought to settle in inner-city areas. A significant part of this literature made use of emerging theories within sociology and critical theory about consumption, particularly Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of class distinction and *habitus* (e.g. Bridge, 2001; Ley, 2003). For example, in Gavin Bridge's (2001b) research on gentrification in Sydney, Australia, real estate agents draw on prospective clients' desire to distinguish themselves from others, therefore helping to turn cultural capital into economic capital. It is within this research that a more complex image emerges of the places where consumers and producers of gentrification meet. Under Bridge (2001a) and Ley's (2003) telling, the gentrification aesthetic is in great part manufactured by real estate agents—and there is a clear interaction between the development of consumer tastes and what John R. Logan and Harvey Molotch (2013) call the 'growth coalition' (developers, politicians, investors, real estate industry).

Moving our gaze back to New York once again, it became apparent in the 1980s that gentrification was leading to the emergence of new tastes and aesthetic preferences amongst a particular class of people. This was especially noticeable in the 'loft life' of the Tribeca and Lower East Side area, which became the blueprint for a

whole new post-industrial chic. This process was investigated in detail in Sharon Zukin's important study, *Loft living: Culture and capital in urban change* (1982). Taking a part-structural and part-cultural approach, Zukin traces how the 'loft' aesthetic evolved from cultural expression to a site of profit. Zukin's research is interesting because it shows how this process of valorisation occurs at the intersection of multiple scales. In the context of post-industrialism in the West, developers started to seek new strategies for making profit. At the same time, artist communities formed in these depreciated areas, helping to turn them into an aesthetic lifestyle choice. In effect, Zukin traces the process of translation from one value (aesthetic, cultural) to another (capitalist), and how that occurs through the meeting between artists, yuppies, and investors. In this way, Zukin's research gives us insight into how values are formed by communities, and are then transformed into a site of speculation.

There is one instance where she explores the contradiction between values in more detail—which bears a strong resemblance to the example of WE ACT in the Bronx (Checker, 2011), cited in the introduction of this chapter. In her telling, there was a crucial moment when artists realised that their cheap loft spaces were under threat. Initially, rezoning by local governments allowed artists to move into warehouse buildings at very little expense to landlords or artists. This enabled artists to form community, create art cheaply, and eventually build social movements to advocate for their interests. As Zukin shows, artists' particular concerns (regarding the art market and support for the arts) turned to tenants' rights in general. Realising their way of life and community was under threat, they sought to ally with other marginal actors, such as original manufacturers still remaining and low-income residents. But, this alliance proved futile: '… [S]ooner or later, a contradiction develops between the production of art and other, higher-rent uses. At that point, real estate development reasserts its dominance over the arts economy' (Ibid: 121). While artists don't have a high purchasing power, their arrival and continued presence makes an area appear legimitate for further investment. In turn, however, their activity also becomes part of the valorisation process itself. What was originally a way to create community wealth almost inevitably gets turned into 'a commodity, a way of life for the wealthy urban professional' (Lees et al., 2008: 119). It is this transformation from non-monetary value to a site of profit, and the conflicts that arise because of it, that can be seen as a turning point in gentrification. As I explore further below, this

mirrors the process of ecological gentrification, where a progressive increase in amenities eventually leads to a turning point in the valuation and commodification of a neighborhood. In fact, this dynamic of quantitative change (e.g. more cultural capital) leading to sudden qualitative change in perceived valuation has been observed in many different studies of the process, though it has rarely been explicitly theorised.

The role of socially vulnerable gentrifiers in an area's revalorisation

Another aspect of this literature that I would like to draw out here is its focus on specific (often marginalised) communities and their role as catalysts of gentrification. Returning the focus on Montreal, where Ley carried out much of his research, Damaris Rose (1989; Rose and Villeneuve, 1994) had begun to do in-depth ethnographic research of single women gentrifiers in areas like the Plateau. Her argument was that many of these women were moving in to the city from their own marginal positions, and strategically benefited from the amenities that were more available in the city core than in suburban areas, which were oriented around the nuclear family. This move was in the context of wider demographic shifts from a nuclear family-oriented Fordist economy, to one where women also began to be expected to join the workforce. Gentrification was thus not just 'colonisation' (Smith, 2005) by an upper class, but a contested, complicated process that could also, contradictorily, involve the pursuit of liberation and new freedoms for some. What also attracted these 'marginal gentrifiers', as Rose called them (1989), was the possibility for building communities and sites of recognition in their new home. Thus, Rose sought to make the case for an understanding of gentrification that included both a political economic understanding of demographic changes, as well as one which appreciated the agency of different actors, many of whom were far from elites.

More broadly, researchers have pointed to the role that single women (Rose, 1989), gay men (Castells, 1983; Lauria and Knopp, 1985; Knopp, 1990), and the Black middle class (Taylor, 1992) often have in gentrification. Though these processes are highly contextual in each city, there are some similarities. What attracts some of these new 'marginal gentrifiers' (Rose, 1989) to working class, and often racialised, neighbourhoods is the availability of amenities and resources that can help them to find a foothold in the changing economy, as well as finding safety and refuge in a community, or in the anonymity that city living offers. How these gentrifiers take

advantage of their position is also highly contextual—some join the property owning class and become upwardly mobile (Castells, 1983; Knopp 1990; Taylor, 1992), while others are eventually displaced themselves (Rose, 1989). But, what is important here is how people in a contradictory position with common interests build community, and how that community then becomes a catalyst for gentrification. Before it does so, however, it must often be translated and homogenised to be more palatable to new, higher-income residents. This process resembles that which Zukin describes in *Loft living*.

An important aspect of demand-side approaches to gentrification has been the exploration of the role of race and ethnicity in the desirability of a neighbourhood. While race, especially in the US, is a strong driver of structural segregation, it also comes in play during gentrification. This plays out in two ways. First, following a period of 'white flight' to the suburbs and 'redlining'—the systematic exclusion of Black and Hispanic people from buying property and taking out loans, often facilitated by local councils and governments—Black and Hispanic-coded inner cities were devalued and underserved (Taylor, 2019). As a corollary, race shapes development discourse, where renewal is often for the benefit of wealthier, white citizens over Black and Hispanic groups (Wyly and Hammel, 2004; Kirkland, 2008; Mumm, 2008; 2014). For example, in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, state-led development redeveloped the core of the city to attract a wealthy white class, to the detriment of its original Black residents (Brand, 2014). In such cases, racialised neighbourhoods are seen as problems to be fixed, as inherently incomplete—the prerequisite for an in-migration of gentrifiers and new homeowners. In this way, gentrification is in part driven by racist preconceptions, where Black neighbourhoods are seen as less valuable, and the Black community is seen as being an obstacle to development and renewal. Second, and perhaps paradoxically given the above, gentrification has been observed to be in part driven by the 'trendiness' of ethnic neighbourhoods. As gentrification became a more prominent investment strategy, areas that previously saw disinvestment were re-appropriated as cool, edgy, diverse, and historic, through a process of cultural and territorial rebranding (e.g. Summers, 2015; 2019). Black and Hispanic communities' culture is then seen as more authentic, lively, and desirable; gentrifiers are attracted to the sense of community, food practices, and culture. Rather than intentionally seeking to displace or hide away the

historically racialised incumbent community, predominantly white gentrifiers live through and benefit from their cultural practices and community. Eventually these communities' practices and social fabric become exploited and appropriated by developers and local governments who aim to translate their culture into a trendy brand, eventually eroding that culture (Wyly and Hammel, 2000; Butler, 2002; Maher, 2011; Mumm, 2014; Sullivan, 2014; Lees, 2016; Prince, 2016; Zukin *et al.*, 2017).

Through the activity of building community and drawing on resources, 'marginal gentrifiers' are able to take advantage of their position and capitalise on the valorisation of their new neighbourhood. However, a key part of this process is the translation of the value of the social fabric and amenities that draws these marginal gentrifiers into a branded identity of diversity/aesthetics/authenticity. This gets to one of the unique aspects of the consumption-oriented literature, where there is often an emphasis on the agency of the gentrifiers, and their own contradictory position within it. But, to draw this out further, there is an acknowledgment that it is often *a community* who have a crucial role in generating perceived value of an area. However, their activity must first be translated into characteristics legible to gentrifying populations in order to be desirable.

The central role of displacement in gentrification research

As mentioned briefly above, displacement features heavily in gentrification literature; proving whether it is occurring or not, and to what extent, is seen as the holy grail of whether gentrification has a net positive or negative effect (Slater, 2006; 2009). Complicating this, however, is the fact that there are multiple kinds of displacement. First, there is the more obvious 'direct displacement', where people are forced to move out of their home through, for example, eviction or rent increases (Marcuse, 1985). Second, there is the less obvious 'indirect displacement', where residents aren't forced to move directly, but feel the pressure to move out of the neighbourhood nonetheless. For example, poor households might decide to move out of their apartment (e.g. because of changes in household size or disagreements with the landlord), but are unable to find another apartment in the area, because landlords increasingly prefer higher-income renters. A sub-category of indirect displacement is cultural displacement (*Ibid.*), where residents begin to feel a slow erosion of their

social networks, resources that they rely on, and sense of community and political power. This might itself lead to pressure to move as well—but not always, as in cases where there are rights protecting long-term owners and tenants, or where there is a social housing stock.

More recently, researchers identified 'phenomenological displacement' (Davidson and Lees, 2010), where displacement is seen also as an ontologically-rooted trauma, threatening a 'loss of sense of place' (Ibid.: 403). The concept was first proposed in a study of 'new-build gentrification' (Davidson and Lees, 2010), which argued that even though development may in some instances be occurring primarily on undeveloped, or non-residential sites (such as buildings formerly intended for industrial use), 'loss of sense of place' is still affecting residents in the surrounding areas and should be considered as a form of displacement itself. As the authors note, 'the point here then is that dis*place*ment is much more than *the* moment of spatial dislocation. To reduce displacement to that moment is to strip meaning from lived space.' (Ibid.: 402). Several studies have explored this further, showing how gentrification is a lived, daily reality that has phenomenological, but very real, effects on communities, and how this kind of violence should be understood as being very different, but no less painful, from physical displacement (Blokland, 2019; Gordon et al., 2017; Parekh, 2015; Pennay, 2014; Stabrowski, 2014).

Due to its maleability, displacement itself has become a contested concept, used in much broader ways than originally described and defined by Peter Marcuse (1986). Marcuse's emphasis on links between land value and displacement, and on physical displacement rather than cultural or phenomenological displacement, lacks the breadth and descriptive power needed for understanding the effects of contemporary urban development (Elliot-Cooper *et al.*, 2020). Thus, displacement has been redefined to refer to a process that 'severs the links between residents and the communities to which they belong, something registered through a range of modalities, including experiential, financial, social, familial, and ecological' (*Ibid.*: 3). This requires conceiving of displacement of as an 'affective, emotional, and material *rupture*' (*Ibid.*: 3, emphasis in original). In this new definition, displacement is reconceived as both a material process, and a cultural and social process—thereby linking demand-side and supply-side definitions of gentrification, which describe the symbolic, institutional, material, and cultural drivers of the process.

However, there is a serious problem with this definition of displacement. If the 'pain of displacement' (*Ibid.*: 12, citing Marcuse, 2010: 87) is central to the definition of gentrification, the concept of gentrification threatens to veer into a purely negative concept, a 'pain narrative' (Tuck and Yang, 2014a), which cannot see the gentrified as 'anything but a problem' (Zibechi, 2012: 203). As mentioned above, gentrification is not exclusively or even necessarily a process of direct displacement or visible manifestations of struggle, even if it is classed. I further explore the issues with such pain narratives in the next section and in Chapter 2. This is not to say that the negative effects of gentrification (i.e. 'pain') should not be the subject of research, rather, these need to be explored dialectically, with room for agency, desire, and conflict.

Indeed, much research on displacement does not frame the process only in negative terms, but as a site of constant struggle. This can be seen in the role of place-making in the gentrification process. The concept of 'place' has a long history within geography and urban geography in particular (Tuan, 1977). It is understood as a corollary to 'space', where place is a site with unique qualitative attributes that can encourage a sense of belonging or attachment (Ibid.). Most communities establish a sense of identity through a sense of place and belonging, and it is often these places that are at the frontline of gentrification, and end up becoming appropriated and made inaccessible to the original residents who did the 'place-making' to begin with. As a corollary, however, resistance to gentrification is often targeted at those places that are at the centre of a community's identity. For example, Barceloneta, a gentrifying neighbourhood in Barcelona, saw the slow erosion of working class community and culture. Nevertheless, the community rallied around an empty building that had housed a cooperative and was set to be demolished. Though the building sat empty for decades, it became a symbol of the neighbourhood's working class past and a key locus for organising against gentrification. The besieged community self-consciously drew on nostalgia for the past to recreate its own identity in the anti-gentrification struggle, centred on the struggle of one key *place* (Gorostiza, 2015). This is just one example of the countless cases in anti-gentrification organising where the community rallies around a symbolic *place*, whose defence is justified by its strong connection to their sense of identity (Robinson, 1995; Newman and Wyly, 2005; Blokland, 2009; Pearsall, 2013; Stabrowski, 2014; Prince, 2016). Just as gentrification erodes and

displaces a community's sense of place, resistance to gentrification often centres on symbolic place-based victories that reclaim a community's sense of self.

As this research emphasises, the way that displacement occurs is, in practice, never purely negative, rather, it highlights the contestation over what is valuable and worthwhile, by different actors and communities. When (material / phenomenological / cultural / social) displacement occurs, the wealth that a community has built up is destroyed. Gentrifiers also play a role in generating different values in the neighbourhood, which become flashpoints in anti-gentrification struggles. Thus, we should see displacement as a site where meaning-making and community values are caught in the cross-fire of urban change, and how these may be either eroded or capitalised on through gentrification. Residents have agency in creating wealth and 'place', while at the same time, developers, investors, and state actors seek to take advantage of this process in the creation of capitalist value.

Contextualising supply- and demand-side approaches within planetary gentrification

Following gentrification's apparent increased importance, geographers began to make claims in the early 2000s that the process had become generalised and globalised, becoming a key strategy of the international elite (Smith, 2002; Atkinson and Bridge, 2004). But the extension of the term to urban development processes in the Global South also saw resistance: researchers have pointed out that the concept, originating in the West, becomes so 'stretched' that it loses meaning—and thereby imposes Western-derived urban theory on 'most of the world' (Maloutas, 2011; Ghertner, 2015). Is this not part of the neo-colonialism of Western theory? Much of the gentrification debate has centred on the role of capital and private property in driving the process, but, in non-Western countries, different institutions, and different values, will often drive urban development (Tang, 2017).

Within urban studies more broadly, there is today a debate on how theories derived in the West, and the Anglo-American academy especially, are often uncritically imported into non-Western contexts. Urban scholars have responded by calling for a 'comparative gesture', de-centring Western cities in the analysis, encouraging researchers to multiply research strategies and reduce theoretical reliance on North/South hierarchies (Robinson, 2011; McFarlane, 2010). The goal is a kind of

'cosmopolitan urbanism' (Robinson 2011) that 'provincialises' Euro-American theory (Chakrabarty, 2009), allowing new urban theories to proliferate. In step with post-colonial challenges to urban theory and Western academia more broadly (Dick and Rimmer, 1998; Bayat, 2000; Roy and AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005), it is imperative to break down theoretical hierarchies, questioning how, or whether, they can be put to work in different regions of the world. A comparative approach helps to decontextualise localised theories that have, due to systemic inequalities within the academic world and global power structures more broadly, been universalised; in other words, it provincialises theories originating in the West, and stirs up new research agendas that do not devalue knowledge from non-Western regions.

In response to this challenge, gentrification scholars are increasingly taking up a comparative approach, seeking to understand the process from a 'planetary' perspective (Lees et al., 2016). Comparative gentrification research has solidified the need for the study of gentrification processes, as a global comparative assessment has, for Lees *et al.*, confirmed that

> gentrification is the leading edge of global urbanism, at least for now, but it is the leading edge beyond the usual suspects, and this is closely correlated with the ways in which contemporary capitalism raises the status of speculation in real estate in particular, not only in the Global North but increasingly in the Global South too. (Lees *et al.* 2016: 21).

Not only has gentrification become a global (yet variegated) process, it has become a crucial and intentional component of contemporary urban growth and capital accumulation strategies (Shin, 2018).

So, in this context, can either demand-side or supply-side approaches still be said to be useful? In demand-side literature, much of the research has sought to understand the process from the perspective of *gentrifiers*. Their agency is highlighted in the process, and there is promising attention paid to how their own process of community-building and wealth creation informs the valorisation of a neighbourhood. However, as has been pointed out at length elsewhere (Slater, 2006; 2009), within this literature, there was a dearth of research that paid attention to the gentrified. Another issue with demand-side approaches is that it is almost all contextual. Highlighting the role of culture, tastes, shifts to a post-industrial economy, gender, sexuality, and race in gentrification can certainly help explain different facets of the process. However, generalisation becomes quite difficult in the context of global gentrification. It would not be entirely accurate to say that countries such as China or the Philippines are

becoming post-industrial; nevertheless, gentrification is visible and clear (He, 2007; Zheng, 2010; Choi, 2016). Certainly, we can say that the rise of the middle class has played a role, but middle class tastes and aesthetics look very different as well (Wang & Lau, 2009). From a comparative perspective, demand-side literature perhaps lacks generalisability; as much of this literature was site-specific, it is hard to test their hypotheses elsewhere.

This issue is not found in the supply-side literature. As Lees *et al.* (2015; 2016; also see Shin, 2018) rigorously show, a structuralist approach has real benefits when doing comparative gentrification studies beyond Global North contexts. However, what is lacking in this literature is that it remains under-explained exactly how valorisation of a certain area takes place. How does the creation of (community) wealth shape the development of an area? Why do qualitative factors—i.e. changes in the perceived use-value of an area—drive gentrification, as so clearly illustrated by the demand-side literature? That is, if, as Lees *et al.* (2016) argue—with a certain measure of circular logic, since gentrification is defined as the influx of capital to an urban area—the underlying commonality is capital, could there also be other commonalities? Despite huge differences in property rights, culture, and history, do people affected by the sudden influx of capital into their neighbourhood respond in similar ways? Though there has been more research on gentrification's effects on low-income residents, there remains little understanding of how they create community, wealth, and forms of resistance—and how this compares across contexts (see Blokland, 2019; Gordon et al., 2017; Parekh, 2015; Stabrowski, 2014; Pennay, 2014; Prince, 2016 for some exceptions, albeit there is little research that is comparative across North-South contexts). The way that displacement has been defined in purely negative terms (Elliot-Cooper, 2020) is a case in point: there is a need to reconceive gentrification not just as diverse forms of pain but as a site of of conflict over what the home should involve, and for whom—a conflict that often takes place between hegemonic and subaltern values.

From a comparative urbanist perspective, these questions are especially pertinent. In cities where informality is more predominant than in the West, there may be a greater reliance on that kind of community wealth—and, in turn, the processes of gentrification may be quite different as a result. Indeed, a comparative approach, drawing from subaltern and political ecological urbanism, offers an opportunity to

explore the effects of gentrification on how people draw on material resources—as this *can* be productively compared across contexts. For this reason, some suggest that comparative gentrification studies requires research that goes beyond rent gaps but also integrates institutional approaches, such as focusing on institutions of rent, cultural norms, and political economic contexts (Ghertner, 2014; Bernt, 2016). What interests me in particular is how people who may be marginalised in different ways can find themselves in a contradictory position—as agents in gentrification, by virtue of creating community wealth and because of complex structures of social stratification and hierarchy. How does gentrification affect the 'life' of a neighbourhood, and how does that life, in turn, shape the big stuff like policy and the flow of capital? For this reason, my own research seeks to compare a 'classic' case of gentrification in Montreal, and a less 'traditional' (or could we say 'provincial') case in Hanoi. Through comparing how long-standing residents engage materially and how this in turn shapes gentrification in both cities, I aim to compare across contexts, while still not universalising gentrification's effects. In the next chapter, I introduce a theoretical framework that seeks to avoid reproducing 'capitalocentrism' (Gibson-Graham, 1996) and Western-centrism in the study of planetary gentrification. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore more contemporary directions in gentrification research that have, I argue, offered insight on the question of valorisation within gentrification, which could be further extended and tested through a comparative approach.

New directions in the materiality of gentrification: mobility, eco-gentrification, and food gentrification

In the following, I review some promising recent developments in the gentrification literature as they pertain to my own research questions. What I am especially interested in is the literature that investigates 'qualitative' drivers of gentrification, that is, how perceived changes in the use-value of an area (e.g. more accessible, modern, or green) are part of revalorisation. I discuss these here at length, in part, because they help toward developing a value theory of gentrification, and, second, as discussing them helps situate my own research project in the wider gentrification literature.

Infrastructure and mobility

Researchers are today exploring how gentrification is in large part driven by infrastructure development and mobility (Kahn, 2007; He, 2007; Rérat and Lees, 2011; Revington, 2015). There are several aspects to this. First is the literature on transit-oriented development (Kahn, 2007; Jones and Ley, 2016; Parajuli and Pojani, 2018; Hoffmann, 2016). Public transit, pedestrianisation, and bike lanes are often seen as more desirable forms of urban transit in a post-suburbanisation context. This literature has found that such development schemes have a good likelihood of increasing housing prices and thus leading to gentrification (*Ibid.*). Second, and more broadly, emerging interest in mobility in urban geography points to the fact that much of urban development is dominated by concerns for access, flow, and transportation (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Adey *et al.*, 2014). Work on 'spatial capital' (Rérat and Lees, 2010; Lees et al., 2016) shows how gentrifiers seek out and take advantage of their ability to move around for work and family life, while staying within a certain region to maintain their social networks. This distinguishes them from low-income urban residents who don't have the 'spatial capital' and have to choose between where they live for work and their social networks. This line of investigation is promising in that it expands the focus from social/cultural capital. Through this lens, we can see how different kinds of wealth—in this case, mobility—are mobilised to create exchange-value.

Ecological gentrification

In tandem with the mainstreaming of sustainability discourse starting in the 1970s, and the latest fashion of terms like 'green cities' and 'climate-smart cities', there has also been a burgeoning field of inquiry into what is being called 'green gentrification' or 'ecological gentrification' (Ceaser, 2010; Gould and Lewis, 2009; 2016; Dooling, 2009; Pearsall, 2010; 2012; Checker, 2011; Curran and Hamilton 2012; Anguelovski *et al.* 2018a; Quastel 2009). Ecological gentrification literature discusses how nature is built, produced, and contested through gentrification; as well as an interest in how the process leads to the unequal distribution of environmental bads (e.g. toxic waste sites), goods (e.g. parks), and services (e.g. fresh water). In many cases, gentrification seems to *lead* to unequal distribution of environmental amenities through sustainable development planning (Banzhaf and McCormick 2006; Checker, 2011). But it can

also be *driven by* changes in environmental amenities, such as the reduction of Locally Unwanted Land Uses (LULUs) or the development of a park (Banzhaf and McCormick, 2006; Bunce, 2009; Dale and Newman, 2009; Pearsall, 2010; Checker, 2011; Curran and Hamilton, 2012; Anguelovski, 2016a). As such, we can think of gentrification as a form of environmental injustice (Gould and Lewis, 2012; Checker, 2011; Anguelovski, 2013; Anguelovski and Martínez-Alier, 2014).

Importantly for my research questions, research on ecological gentrification has sought to explore the effects of environmental capital in shaping the process of gentrification—for example, the role of parks, ecosystem goods and services, and 'urban commons' in the commodification and branding of an urban area. One poignant example of comparative urbanism in the subfield of ecological gentrification is Isabelle Anguelovski's study on three neighbourhoods in Havana, Boston, and Barcelona. A shared methodological approach, for Anguelovski, requires listening to what those affected by gentrification have in common. She finds that shared values such as 'place', 'home', and 'refuge' reappear in each case study, as well as the strategies that communities use to heal the wounds of long-lasting trauma and mobilise against gentrification. In this research, marginalised communities in both Western and non-Western contexts are not static vessels but are busy creating meaning, wealth, and environmental amenities (Anguelovski, 2014).

Another aspect of this literature is the contradiction experienced by many communities, where they must make strategic decisions about how to avoid displacement while improving the environmental quality of their place—making their neighbourhood 'just green enough.' Yet, it has the unfortunate side-effect of still helping to increase the attractiveness of that area for real estate investment (Curran & Hamilton, 2012; 2017; Wolch et al., 2014). Community gardens, fresh food markets, and other 'green' activities can have a similar effect, where they become attractive to new kinds of residents and flashpoints in the struggle against gentrification (Anguelovski, 2016b; Alkon & Cadji, 2018; Marche, 2018). While community groups and residents clearly want their neighbourhoods to be better and more liveable, many are aware that this represents a challenge—as these efforts may lead to eventual displacement from the neighbourhood that they sought to improve.

More recently, there has been growing interest in understanding these forms of gentrification through the lens of value. In evaluating state-level greening

interventions in several case studies, one study argued that a predominant driver of these dynamics is what they call the creation of a 'green gap' which facilitates the appropriation of land and landscapes of racially marginalised people. As the authors note, 'The green gap emerges when land deemed vacant, underused, or contaminated is identified by developers as a possible area to be 'greened,' generating amenities that may allow for higher economic value and profit accumulation' (Anguelovski *et al.*, 2018). Importantly, this gap is made possible, as with other forms of gentrification, through the devaluation of certain landscapes through racialised, and classist, uneven development. However, in the production of these new green amenities, value is generated largely for the benefit of high-end 'sustainable' lifestyles, a form of commodified environmentalism oriented towards the creative class.

Taking this argument further, Hillary Angelo (2019) first assesses the literature that shows how greening creates 'added value' for real estate investments, and then seeks to ask *why* this occurs, and in what contexts. Angelo contextualises this process of greening in a historical perspective, where greening has become a moral good in itself, which is increasingly seen as ahistorically, apolitically beneficial, and thus difficult to critique. Racialised and gendered understandings of 'nature' and 'wilderness' compound this value attributed to green amenities, where certain socio-natures are unseen or erased as being too messy, or less valuable. In turn, others are appropriated or translated into the 'added value' of 'green', a pure, depoliticised commodity intended for the consumption of a certain class. In this way, Angelo highlights the contested valuations and meanings of 'green' and argues that green *itself* is not good, but that it has emerged out of a historically-contingent, ideological way of seeing nature.

This is in turn facilitated by a switch by capital globally to a 'new value-nature nexus' (Leonardi, 2019). Rather than value being singularly produced through production and labour, processes of capital accumulation are increasingly clustered around a kind of 'value grabbing' of environmental goods, such as carbon credits, on sites of wilderness for 'green' development, due to a crisis within capital regarding its own limits (Andreucci et al., 2017). This switch resulted from the collapse of the Fordist model, wherein capitalist accumulation was largely driven by primary production. The 'spatial fix' (Harvey, 2006) of the 1970s has made way for a 'green

fix' as capital is beginning to face its own limits of accumulation through the critical harm done to its own life support systems. Today, the 'greening' of urban development should be contextualised within the drive to resolve these limits through the creation of opportunities for investment in 'green' commodities, 'fixing' capital in place but also ostensibly 'fixing' the ecological crisis—what Melinda Cooper calls the 'bioeconomy', where speculation simultaneously, and deliriously, seeks to move beyond physical limits and bio-dynamic processes, while working to package these very same processes as sites of investment (Cooper, 2011; Andreucci, 2017).

Taken together, the eco-gentrification literature opens the door to exploring, not only how wealth is created by communities, but also how it is valued by the community, fought for, and appropriated by elites. It also links these movements of capital to a political economy increasingly seeking to resolve and internalise the 'natural' limits to capital accumulation. Like Anguelovski (2014), my own interest is in the socio-environmental amenities generated by locals themselves—how are community gardens, reclaimed land, social hubs like cheap restaurants and supermarkets, and community groups affected by, and part of, gentrification? In other words, how are 'natures' and 'ecosystems' in large part created and managed by residents at risk because of gentrification, and subsequently appropriated by it? And how do residents respond when they are under threat?

Food and gentrification

There is a tension between understanding gentrification's root causes and the often more visible, but perhaps less instrumental, signs of gentrification. This tension is particularly at play in the research and discourse around food and gentrification. The signs of gentrification as depicted in the popular media are often food-related; frozen yoghurt stores, third-wave coffee shops, and gourmet bodegas are easy to recognize, make fun of, and target. For many, food and gentrification go hand-in-hand. This renewed focus on cultural markers of gentrification in the public debate serves to remind us that individualist, consumer-oriented explanations have a tendency to be more palatable to the media and the public. As Willy Staley writes in *The New York Times Magazine*, 'Investors could buy and sell every building on your block without your ever noticing, but the coffee shop where the staff is mean to everybody is right in front of you' (Staley, 2018).

Indeed, literature on food and gentrification, with some exceptions, has largely focused on the role that new residents and businesses have had in driving gentrification (e.g. Bridge and Dowling, 2001; Cohen, 2018; Havlik, 2014; Hanser and Hyde, 2014; Hyde, 2014; Ilkucan and Sandikci, 2005; Joassart-Marcelli and Bosco, 2018; LeBesco and Naccarato, 2015; Mamonova and Sutherland, 2015; Zukin *et al.*, 2017). Often linked to research investigating the class *habitus* of the gentrifiers, this line of inquiry seeks to explain how taste, culture, and consumer demands can lead to upscaling in the area. While the food-eating habits of the newcomers have been extensively explored, the food spaces of low-income, marginalised residents—and how these change through gentrification—are rarely investigated (for some exceptions, see Freeman, 2011; Henson, 2013; Whittle et al., 2015; Huse, 2016; Kern, 2016; Anguelovski, 2014; Anguelovski, 2016b; Pennay *et al.*, 2014; González and Waley, 2013). What is clear is that, just like early debates on cultural capital and artists' roles in gentrification, food has become one more visible, and thus often more discussed, aspect of gentrification. With little reflection, researchers are often rehashing debates between demand-side and supply-side theories, often focusing on cultural movements and gentrifiers rather than the way by which they are taken advantage of by developers and the urban growth coalition to extract a profit, or how the victims of gentrification themselves respond.

However, within the literature on food and gentrification there are several interesting recent directions. First, there is some research that discusses how original residents respond to gentrification, and the creation of food deserts, in their daily food habits. Food, for many, is a material resource that they rely on, and to which their relationship changes as their neighbourhood gentrifies. Whittle et al. (2015), for example, find that gentrification in San Francisco led people living with HIV/AIDS to lose access to food, due to having to pay high rents, resulting in personally and socially unacceptable strategies of accessing cheap food, such as relying on friends, family, and charities, stealing food, or turning to selling drugs. Second, while many original residents already engage in alternative food practices, research shows that some of these practices are then reappropriated by white consumers and become a vehicle for gentrification (Alkon and Cadji, 2018; Henson, 2013; Hanser and Hyde, 2014; González and Waley, 2012; Hyde, 2014). Alkon and Cadji (2018) note that initiatives by food justice organisations can also unintentionally accelerate

gentrification. Third, developments that may initially seem positive, such as new healthy supermarkets in a neighbourhood with poor food access, may themselves actually be inaccessible to impoverished and marginalised residents, and symbolically raise the value of the neighbourhood. These developments may also lead more directly to the loss of socio-cultural amenities and spaces, and corresponding traditions that surround them (Anguelovski, 2016; Sullivan, 2014). Fourth, a small set of research also looks at how residents also then seek to resist these developments, through local actions, reclaiming food spaces, and contesting the appropriation of their identity for the purpose of profit (Henson, 2013; Anguelovski, 2016; Alkon and Cadji, 2018). Food often becomes a site of meaning-making and resistance for original residents—and thus an important locus for the contestation of different values.

These contestations between community food practices and commodification are made rather vivid in research on the conflicts that arise from community gardens in gentrifying neighbourhoods. In one study, GIS analysis showed that proximity to community gardens is associated with increased income per capita, suggesting that low-income residents may paradoxically be displaced as they start community gardens and improve the environmental and food services in their community (Maantay and Maroko, 2018). Conversely, community gardens can also be seen a form of outsourcing by the state of the maintenance of public space through volunteer labour (Rosol, 2018). One case study of the value conflicts over urban agriculture in Portland Oregon is especially interesting in this regard (McClintock, 2017). In Portland, Black residents had been doing backyard and urban agriculture for a long time. However, when white residents moved in and began gardening in their front lots in a more conspicuous way, the property value of the neighbourhood increased. In other words, urban agriculture by new white residents, though functionally quite similar as that practiced by Black residents, was perceived as increasing the desirability of a neighbourhood, while at the same time pushing original gardeners out. In this way, foodways, like cultural capital and other use-value changes, are both a subject for appropriation by capital, and highly racialised.

What is the mechanism that enables this to occur? McClintock argues that social reproduction is ‘misrecognised’ as cultural and sustainability capital, facilitated by ground rent appropriation and racial capital. McClintock argues that, as more urban

agriculture projects start to appear, and more and more of them are organised by white residents, there is a point at which the *quantity* of (white-coded) urban gardening leads to a *qualitative* shift where the neighbourhood becomes perceived as being 'sustainable' or 'green'. In other words, there is a point at which food growing becomes a symbolic good, removed from its actual benefits for nutrition or community-building, that can be 'read' by capital as being more valuable. It is only 'read' as more valuable, however, when white people engage in these practices. Importantly, McClintock rejects the (classical economist and Marxist) idea that labour itself creates the value here, rather, value is formed through this symbolic misrecognition. This qualitative shift is coupled to wider dynamics of uneven development, such as the way by which growth machines employ urban agriculture to rebrand areas as cool, and the broader process of disinvestment and reinvestment that underlies gentrification more generally (Sbicca, 2019).

The literature on community gardens, and McClintock's paper in particular, shows how urban agriculture, and social reproduction practices more generally, can contribute to the valorisation of a neighbourhood. These case studies emphasise the role that un-valued wealth has in the creation of capitalist value. Conversely, and dialectically, the 'misrecognition' of this material activity results in tensions and resistance, where marginalised peoples seek to resist the appropriation of their activity as a site of profit accumulation, either through fighting the branding of their neighbourhood, re-asserting social reproduction practices as inherently valuable, or using public space as a way to create community and eventually fight gentrification. This also points to an aporia in the gentrification literature: the question of how qualitative (incommensurable) values are transformed into capitalist value, and the role that material life activity has in that process.

Conclusion: Foodways as a lens to observe value translations

In brief, while the gentrification literature is not always clear on the causes of revalorisation in gentrification, and there is little direct theoretical engagement with the question of value and gentrification, it is still possible to discern a broad pattern from the literature that transcends different schools of research. First, a clear driver of gentrification is the potential profit—or ground rent—gained from the revalorisation of an area and the exclusionary benefits derived from capturing it. This prompts

investment, redevelopment, and state-led strategies that facilitate further investment. It also, by design, generates an environment which systematically excludes those without the capital to participate—and eventually displaces them. Second, more contextual drivers could include wider economic changes (post-industrialism, consumer preferences for housing, gender roles) that lead to reinvestment in previously disinvested areas. Here, we must also include state-led gentrification strategies and broader trends such as off-shoring and increased investment in real estate globally. A third category of drivers of an area's (re)valorisation is that of changed use-values, or qualitative changes, which could include, for example, transport, infrastructure, greening, cultural capital, food spaces, and so on. Here, we see dynamics playing out where communities generate different forms of wealth (e.g. cultural capital, environmental amenities) that then lead to a more attractive investment environment. Given the right investment environment, successive and increasing qualitative changes can lead to an inflection point in the value of the neighbourhood. In other words, it is at this point that we see an interplay between the activity of the gentrified, gentrifiers, wider political economic changes, and a suddenly wider rent gap. Though other aspects of gentrification certainly merit exploration, it is this contradictory space—where community activity and capitalist value meet—that interests me in this research.

Yet, beyond these three broader outlines of how valorisation takes place, there has been little theorisation of the seeming paradox of how a community may create wealth, and then lose it. While terms such as cultural capital, spatial capital, rent gap, green gap, and so on often indicate some reference to a theory of value, there has been little explicit engagement with, or elaboration of, a value theory that can explain these changes. It should also be noted that many of these findings are drawn from North American and European contexts, so there is room to further investigate whether these patterns hold true in non-Western regions. Nevertheless, as I sought to show, ecological gentrification and food gentrification especially offers some promising insight into the contradiction of value and the way by which values are translated through gentrification.

Food, in particular, can be a productive—yet still quite unexplored—lens through which to look at the effects of gentrification, especially as a site of value translations, and as an entry point into how it affects and interacts with people's everyday lives.

Though the subject of food and gentrification is still a growing field of research, overall, it merits more exploration. It is clear that food often takes centre stage in gentrification. Food is both material and social, it is grown locally and imported from all over the world, it is tied to traditions, memories and places. As Joshua Sbicca notes,

> Food offers a particularly visceral entry point into the politics and processes of gentrification. It is not just that humans must eat to survive. Food is an economic anchor for community development. Food is also culture. Food is therefore a proxy for social divisions and social cohesion. (Sbicca, 2018: 3)

Perhaps the role of material life is more viscerally present through the literature on ecological gentrification because gardening, food spaces, and environmental amenities have a certain character of being for the community, personal, and materially beneficial all at once.

In my research, encouraged by these new directions in gentrification studies, I seek to explore how food, and people's material, everyday activities, are affected by gentrification, and how these actions, in turn, interact with hegemonic structures of power—either through helping to further valorise an area or by resisting and challenging the valorisation process. I see food as a way to get at the material, lived realities of gentrification—what Anna Tsing would call the 'latent commons', the 'value produced without capitalist control', which is then translated *into* value for the real estate market (Tsing, 2015: 124). In the next chapter, I further develop an argument for a non-capitalocentric approach to value—what I call an ambidextrous theory of value, which can bring together an understanding of material life and how capital is embedded within it through hegemonic structures across North and South contexts. I also further explore how studying material life from the perspective of foodways can offer deeper insight into the meeting point between community wealth and capitalist valorisation.

Chapter 2

Material life, value, and hegemony

> We are here no longer 'in' the law of value, but at its frontiers.
>
> Samir Amin (2018: 85)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the role of value within the literature on gentrification, and suggested that there is need for more comparative gentrification research that cuts across North and South contexts. When developing a research approach to do this, I was faced with a problem: How can I, as a white scholar who has spent most of his adult life in North America and Europe, study gentrification comparatively in non-Western and Western contexts? How can I ensure that my research and findings can see and speak to the differences and similarities between two different places? It is this conundrum that I respond to in this chapter, by introducing a theoretical approach suited for the study of comparative gentrification. In the following, I outline three key terms that guided my research: material life, value, and hegemony. I pay particular attention to value, as it constitutes the core of my research question. Before doing so, however, I discuss the challenges posed by the field of subaltern urbanism, which I hoped to meet in my research and which my theoretical approach responds to.

Challenges posed by subaltern urbanism

The question of how to see and speak across differences has been approached at length within the field of subaltern urbanism (Bayat, 2000; Roy & AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2011; Chattopadhyay, 2012). Within the field, attention is often paid to forms of resistance and collective action which revolve around domestic spaces, subsistence activity, or forms of 'everyday resistance' against authority, which are rarely articulated by those who seek to represent them (e.g. journalists, humanitarian aid

workers, the state, or unions)(Rigg, 2007; Kudva, 2009). As such, subaltern urbanism seeks to uncover what remains unsaid and unseen within hegemonic discourse.

In developing my theoretical approach, I identified four different challenges, derived from subaltern approaches, that I wanted to meet in my comparative research of North/South gentrification. The first is the challenge of *destabilising binaries*. Within subaltern urbanism, binaries such as formal and informal, rural and urban, nature and society are often challenged in understanding urban development in non-Western contexts (Roy & AlSayyad, 2004; Roy, 2005; Thieme *et al.,* 2017; Narayanan, 2017; Steele *et al.*, 2019). While informality and formality is a distinction that mainly relies on certain images of a (liberal) state that seeks to formalise economic activity, informality is the driver of economic activity in many cities in the Global South. In this way, informality is in fact a misnomer as it centres the (formal) market while connoting non-state controlled market activity with disorder. For this reason, informality is a site of theorisation rather than being relegated to the sidelines of theory (Roy, 2005; Roy, 2011). Likewise, urban space often does not conform to Western preconceptions, for example, cities are often mega-agglomerations with no clear centre, and therefore sharply distinct categories like urban core/suburban/rural often do not apply (Goonewardena, 2014; Brenner, 2013). While some binaries, such as formal and informal, rural and urban, remain helpful, they must be reconceived and interrogated in order to better come to terms with the particularities of different contexts. The challenge is thus not so much doing away with binaries altogether as it is one of not taking binaries as a given, or of focusing on one half of the binary (the 'urban', the 'formal') while relegating the other to inconsequentiality (the 'rural', the 'informal').

The second is the challenge of refusing pain narratives. In the article 'R-words: Refusing research', Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that much of social science research is defined by narratives that seek to speak to pain rather than the hopes, desires, and actions of its subjects. People become victims rather than agents, they become objects of study rather than subjects who may in fact refuse to speak their story to the researcher. This tendency hides much of what people are actually doing. As they note, 'Pain narratives are always incomplete. They bemoan the food deserts, but forget to see the food innovations; they lament the concrete jungles and miss the roses and the tobacco from concrete' (Tuck and Yang, 2014a: 231). They suggest

'desire-based' research as an antidote, which 'is about working inside a more complex and dynamic understanding of what one, or a community, comes to know in (a) lived life' (*Ibid.*). Similarly, Raúl Zibechi, in reviewing the work of Western social scientists such as Loïc Wacquant, Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Negri, and Manuell Castells, notes that these authors are 'unable to see the peripheries as anything but a problem, defined only in negative terms' (Zibechi, 2012: 203). Zibechi shows that urban peripheries are constituted by networks of mutual aid, care, and reciprocity, often led by women, and through these networks, political solidarity and forms of organisation are activated, which have become decisive political actors across the region. Subaltern urbanism means, in part, refusing to cast the poor as victims who can only voice pain.

The third is the challenge of *defamiliarisation*. In a special issue on urban theory from the vantage point of Johannesburg, Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nutall note that to write about Africa means troubling the given assumptions and narratives we already have about the city, which frame it in terms of otherness or being '*apart from the world'* (Mbembe and Nutall, 2004: 348). As a consequence, they suggest urban research as a process of defamiliarisation:

> In the attempt to overturn predominant readings of Africa, we need to identify sites within the continent, entry and exit points not usually dwelt upon in research and public discourse, that defamiliarise commonsense readings of Africa. Such sites would throw people off their routine readings and deciphering of African spaces. (*Ibid.*: 352).

'Routine' assumptions can be undercut through representations of the metropolis that do not correspond to familiar tropes, but which consist of 'leakages, lines of flight... borderlands and interfaces' (*Ibid.*: 354). Defamiliarisation is an important challenge for comparative research because it does not oppose two sites as 'normal' and 'other' but rather equally informative sites of theory generation.

This brings me to my last challenge, which is that subaltern urbanism is not just useful for studying 'the South' but also for 'the North'. In the same essay cited above, Raúl Zibechi challenges Western theorists who assume that, even in the North, the lives of the marginalised are rife with immiseration, despair, and abandonment by the state, with little hope for being lifted up, aside from party policies or a return to traditional unions or social movements (Zibechi, 2012: 198-204). Zibechi cites Giorgio Agamben, who argues that the urban poor in the West are faced with a stripped-down 'bare life' bereft of political action (Agamben, 1998). While Zibechi

does not deny that this is the case *in the West*, he contests the validity of the claim in the Latin American context, where he sees modes of subsistence as organising tools themselves. However, this begs the question of whether a subaltern urbanism may not itself be useful in *studying Western cities*, to determine what agency people do have in the face of bare life (see, e.g., Schindler, 2014, for an example of subaltern urbanism applied to a Global North context). Indeed, comparative urbanism demands a sort of methodological discipline which does not set two sites up as fundamentally 'other' but comparable, and can inform each other. The challenge is thus: how can studying informal organisation in the South inform our understanding of informality in the North? The challenge of conceiving of subaltern urbanism within the South *and* the North is one of the central interests that drives my research—one which I explore at greater length in Chapter 6.

In the rest of the chapter, I present three concepts that framed my research methods, developed with the challenges presented by subaltern urbanism in mind. The impetus was to orient my research around concepts that were broad and mobile enough to be used across contexts, which still have the explanatory power to study the relationship between everyday life and gentrification. The three concepts, *material life*, *value*, and *hegemony*, deal with three different sub-questions: (1) how to understand the relationship between everyday life and gentrification, (2) how to understand the relationship between everyday life and the formation of value, and (3) the role of dominant institutions in shaping these relationships—and in how residents respond to those institutions. Each of these questions are then in turn dealt with in subsequent chapters (see Table 1). In the following, I explore each concept at greater length.

	Material life	*Value*	*Hegemony*
Definition	The everyday resources, habits, and wealth that exist both outside of and are in relationship to systems of monetary exchange and state institutions.	A social relation which determines what is important or good in a given society or context.	The political, ideological, and cultural institutions that hold together dominant political economic structures.
Research question	How does gentrification affect the material life and resources of historically disadvantaged residents, how do they draw on those resources to respond to gentrification?	How are different values made, translated, and then brought into conflict when an area appreciates in monetary value? What is the role of material life in this process?	How is material life seen, structured, enabled, and limited by hegemonic groups?
Data collected	Foodways Mutual aid Socio-natural wealth	Observation of public discourse, official statements, public protest actions, weapons of the weak, and everyday resistance.	Observation of state officials, real estate agents, power dynamics, censorship and self-censorship, NGO and civil society activity
Location in this study	Chapters 5 and 6	Chapters 6 and 7	Chapter 7

Table 1 Theoretical concepts and how they are used in this study.
See also Table 4 in Chapter 3.

Material life

Can the building of community, the creation of family-friendly, green, and liveable spaces by its residents, increase the real estate value of an area? In other words, in what way is gentrification a *daily* and *material* process underpinned by the labour of the gentrified? And how can this process be understood in a way that does not collapse difference, and in fact cross-pollinates lessons from different contexts?

To address these questions, I found the work of Andrej Grubačić and Denis O'Hearn (2016) useful. They focus on exilic societies, people living 'at the edges' of the dominant socio-economic system—pirates, Cossacks, Zapatistas, and prisoners. If these groups are marginal to capitalism, then they must have an economic basis that

allows them to live this way. To understand the material basis of these peoples' strategies of escape, the authors use both a world-historical approach[9] (Anderson, 2016; Luxemburg, 2015; Polanyi, 1944; Wallerstein, 1979; Braudel, 1979) as well as a framework that allows them to see

> cooperation and self-organisation from below.... [W]e want to know how people cooperate in the process of providing their material subsistence *but also* such very human necessities as shared communications, collective joy, and the formation of solidarity within communal spaces. (Grubačić and O'Hearn, 2016: 3, italics in original)

To do so, they borrow from Fernand Braudel, who divided the dominant capitalist economy into three sectors: the formalised market economy, monopoly capitalism or the anti-market ('where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates') and *material life*: 'that lowest stratum of the non-economy, the soil into which capitalism thrusts its roots but which it can never really penetrate' (Ibid: 2, citing Braudel, 1979: 229-230).

Material life refers to the reality that underlies and supports all life, including reproductive labour, play, leisure, and biophysical flows. It includes the social world that surrounds food: food-buying, food-making, and food-sharing. But, it also has a more metaphorical aspect: the everydayness of life, in all its mundane and boring aspects, as opposed to a more abstracted, metaphysical understanding of life. Though the process of gentrification has often been analyzed in terms of rent, demographics, displacement, and so on, there is little research that looks at how the process has affected that sub-stratum of neighbourhood life of original residents. This is not unique to the study of gentrification; it holds true for many political economy approaches, from neoclassical to Marxist. As Grubačić and O'Hearn note with regard to Marxist political economy, this 'shouldn't be a surprise. Marx's energy went into his main intellectual project of understanding the organisation and development of capitalist commodity production' (Grubačić and O'Hearn, 2016: 3). Similarly, neoclassical economics is primarily concerned with tracing and modelling exchange in the 'formal' economy, while—as Polanyi's (1944) work has emphasised—reciprocal, cooperative exchange remains invisible. Following Grubačić and O'Hearn once again, while 'the market economy and monopoly capital have been exhaustively researched and analyzed, the lowest (and largest) sector of material life is still

[9] A 'world-historical' approach analyses the development of the modern market economy as a process arising through uneven development between nations, empires, and territories.

undertheorised' (Ibid: 2). The same holds true for gentrification: while the global flows of capital, the movement of elite strategies of speculation, the needs and wants of the incoming residents, have been theorised at length, we know very little about the sub-stratum of gentrification, how it implicates people in the day-to-day.

Importantly, by centring a world-historical approach to the development of market relations, Grubačić and O'Hearn are able to see how the relationship between material life and the market is co-constitutive—they can trace the way by which exilic communities and colonial 'frontiers' can exist both inside and outside capitalism, challenge it and help change it when they become reincorporated into it. In their words:

> Rather than assuming that one lives either within or outside of states or capitalist economies, we propose that it may be more useful to ... assume that most people have contradictory locations with regard to states and formal labour. Some things draw them into world-systemic and state-centred processes and others lead them to withdraw or seek withdrawal from those processes. Some of the things they do for reasons of altruism or mutual aid may be contradictory in the sense that they strengthen aspects of community while they simultaneously cheapen the cost of reproducing labour and thus contribute positively to capital accumulation. (Grubačić and O'Hearn, 2016: 6)

And, to underline this point further,

> To return to Braudel's analogy, if utopian groups succeed in fertilising the soil of material life, they may also attract and nourish the roots of capital and give it reasons to penetrate. (Ibid.)

Like Grubačić and O'Hearn, I wanted to do more than observe people's everyday strategies; I was interested in how material life then becomes a frontier for gentrification and further accumulation of capitalist value. In the previous chapter, I described instances where community activity—such as environmental justice organising, gardening, and the creation of cultural capital—itself contributes to the valorisation of a neighbourhood through gentrification. It is this seeming contradiction that I wanted to better understand in my research. The concept of material life is useful here because it is oriented around the contradictions of living in a capitalist society, giving room for resistance to it and, possibly, subsequent translation into the market society. It is also in line with subaltern urbanism, in that it opens the door to desire-based research and is an expansive enough concept to apply to a wide diversity of contexts—anywhere where society and capital coexist. Further, it centres everyday, material and social experience as the ground of that process—and thus focuses on what is immediately present to people as they live it. I am interested

in the very fine-grained interactions between this ground-level activity and the value translations that lead to a neighbourhood becoming desirable. The concept of material life is fecund in that regard.

While material life has similarities with concepts like 'the commons' (Ostrom, 1990), 'social reproduction' (Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Bhattacharya, 2017; Munro, 2019), and 'diverse economies' (Gibson-Graham, 2008) these do not always represent this dynamic of recapture and re-extraction. Some of the early literature on the commons has been criticised for not fully accounting for the relationship between the commons and the global market economy (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014). The commons are also shaped by and implicated in the historical development of capitalism. Critical commons theorists like Silvia Federici (2012), David Bollier, Silke Helfrich (2014), and Peter Linebaugh (2014) have attempted to centre this relationship in their understanding of the commons, nevertheless, the term continues to be used ambiguously. Social reproduction—the labour, such as child rearing, cleaning, and cooking, often performed by women, that maintains the capitalist economy and yet is systematically undervalued—is an important concept in feminist and Marxist scholarship (Della Costa and James, 1972; Bhattacharya, 2017; Munro, 2019). Usefully, feminist scholarship on social reproduction has theorised how reproductive labour becomes taken up into processes of capitalist accumulation, showing how gendered divisions and hierarchies are fundamental to capitalist accumulation (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999). 'Diverse economies', another similar concept, which, building on Marxist feminist literature, also gives insight into the capitalist extraction of under-valued wealth. For Gibson-Graham (2008), the challenge is to see these diverse economies, which may engage with, but function differently from, the dominant economic system. They use the metaphor of an economy that is shaped like an iceberg—a metaphor initially used by materialist ecofeminist Maria Mies (2007; Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999).[10] Above the water you have the most visible: money, GDP, interest, rent, mortgages, taxes, the world of finance. Below the surface, however, you have everything that keeps the economy afloat: raising children, cooking, daily interactions between neighbours and friends, emotional support, the cycles of the Earth system, micro-biomes. The work of J.K. Gibson-Graham has rightly urged us to go beyond 'capitalocentrism' (1996),

[10] Thanks to Corinna Dengler for alerting me to Maria Mies' earlier use of the metaphor.

which was one of the inspirations for my own approach. However, while diverse economies approaches can help in understanding what's below the tip of the iceberg, this doesn't explain very well how this 'diversity' then gets reintegrated by the dominant economic system. Both diverse economies and social reproduction approaches set up a binary (e.g. between production and reproduction, capitalist and diverse economies) that can unwittingly 'reinscribe the sexual/racial divisions of labour of another era' (Cooper, 2015: 50) or romanticise certain forms of human activity as 'outside' of capitalism. These are wide-ranging debates that cannot be discussed at length here, but what interests me especially are questions such as, what happens at the boundary between the tip of the iceberg and the ice underwater? How does the unseen, diverse economy, constantly get translated into monetary value?

Though terms like 'the commons', 'social reproduction', and 'diverse economies' are certainly useful, the framework developed by Grubačić and O'Hearn is more appropriate for my own research. Material life is constituted by the everyday resources, habits, and wealth that exist both outside of, and yet also in relationship to, systems of monetary exchange and state institutions. Even conceptually, the metaphor of soil and roots is fecund: there is a constant flow of water and nutrients from the soil to the roots of the market society. The barrier here is porous, characterised by exchange and extraction. What I am interested in, and what a material life approach helps with, is understanding how things like building community, sharing food, making a neighbourhood safer, and gardening can become translated into increased real estate value in the neighbourhood.

Material life itself is a broad scope through which to observe the effects of gentrification. To narrow my scope, I focused on *foodways* as a subset of material life. To better understand the nature of food access and choices, academics in the fields of geography, sociology, anthropology, and social studies of health and nutrition have started investigating what they call 'foodways.' Foodways are variously defined as 'a critical lens to explore trans-cultural, trans-national, and trans-regional mobility, locality, and local embeddedness of foodstuffs' (de la Peña and Lawrance 2013: 2) and 'the cultural and social practices that affect food consumption, including how and what communities eat, where and how they shop and what motivates their food preferences' (Alkon *et al.* 2013, p.127). This literature acknowledges that food is an active, mobile substance, has more-than-material

properties, and carries varied cultural meanings. The 'foodways' concept is also designed to be applicable across cultural and political economic contexts. Thus, a foodways approach integrates a wide breadth of everyday experience.

If material life constitutes the wealth not fully absorbed into the market, foodways are crucial components of material life strategies. Of course, material life has many other components: health, metabolic rhythms, running into people on the street, multi-species relationships; in short, activity which is in these permeable margins but not fully integrated into the systems of commodity exchange. In my research, I approach material life through the lens of foodways as I find it a particularly instructive component of material life. Foodways, like material life, are both fully social and material, between and outside of markets, locally and globally; but their materiality makes them particularly traceable and observable.

A foodways approach to gentrification also has methodological and ethical implications: food's materiality and sociality require engagement with everyday experience. Indeed, observing foodways can help meet the challenge of perpetuating simplistic 'pain narratives' of the 'victims' of gentrification. The lens of food can therefore be a useful way to take seriously 'subaltern' strategies and 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985; further defined below in the section on hegemony). Historically marginalised residents in a gentrifying area may not directly articulate their resistance to the process in institutional terms, but their actions—such as sharing food, gift-giving, and mutual aid, or even avoiding authorities or illegal use of public space—may be forms of resistance or subversion. Further, as a kind of material that exists at the boundary between conceptions of nature and society, food takes an important role in the discourse around sustainability, health, and cleanliness (Shafie & Rennie, 2012; Seyfang, 2006; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008). From organic markets to community gardens, food spaces are often key flash points in gentrification struggles (Anguelovski, 2016b; Alkon and Cadji, 2018; Henson, 2013).

A focus on food also allowed me to engage with the growing literature on green/environmental/ecological gentrification (e.g. Anguelovski *et al.* 2018a) and, by extension, the field of urban political ecology (Heynen et al., 2006; Swyngedouw & Kaika, 2014). The latter has, importantly, sought to break down our understanding of cities as 'unnatural' spaces, embedded in flows of material, waste, water, and energy. In short, looking at the foodways of the gentrified means bringing gentrification

research ‘down to earth’ in more sense than one: it offers insight into gentrification from the ground up, and as an ecological process—not just economic. In addition, given that gentrification is increasingly a global process, focusing on material, lived experiences can be a fruitful way to observe connections between disparate contexts. Here, looking at food practices as weapons of the weak, which I discuss in the section below on hegemony, can move towards subverting pain narratives prominent in social science research as well as approaches that universalise capital as an all-encompassing force.

In summary, this research project first seeks to explore *how the process of gentrification affects the material life and resources of historically disadvantaged residents, how they draw on those resources to respond to gentrification. I observe material life through a foodways lens, which allows me to compare diverse contexts and connect social and material effects through everyday experience*. I explore these questions directly in Chapter 5, where I compare the ways by which residents engaged in material life in their responses to gentrification.

Value

If the study of gentrification is to take a truly comparative approach, it also needs to go beyond a strictly economistic approach to value as well—it cannot be limited to methodological capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Because value theory is one of the more controversial, and substantive, questions in political theory, and because the question of value stands at the centre of my research question, a more substantial part of this chapter is devoted to it.

The meaning of value

How we talk about value is shaped by the idea of money. It is very hard to talk about the worth of something without translating or contrasting it to monetary value. And yet, the idea of value is also dualistic. This is noticeable in the way we contrast the words ‘value’ and ‘values’, where the first connotes economic value, and the second moral values. This serves to render *value* as neutral and universal while *values* are considered subjective and particular (Graeber, 2013). However, economic values are not neutral; they are shaped by dominant interests, politics, and relationships.

Throughout this work, I do not distinguish between value and values; both meanings of value are collapsed into one. In my understanding of the term, 'value' refers to both economic and moral, subjective value. Here, value takes on a broader meaning: what is deemed important, 'the Good'. In this way, value is a *social* property, arising out of specific cultural ways of seeing and engaging in relationships—not just an economic one. Because of this, I rely on an anthropological definition of value, rather than one based in economic theory (Graeber, 2001; 2013). Values often are made real in the world as symbolic markers of world-views, and therefore a site of contested meaning and interpretation—think of the dollar sign or the US flag. Values may be shaped by non-human actors, but they are also fundamentally an emergent property of human society. As such, values are contingent on hegemonic and institutionalised systems of power. Value is therefore, at its very root, a political concept. *Politics*, being the process of making decisions collectively, is about the way that diverse values are voiced, acted upon, shaped, determined, or disregarded in society (Arendt, 2009; Habermas, 2015). The articulation of value, or the silencing of it, whether by individuals or collectives, is the essence of the political process. It is from this context that different theories of value arise: the recognition that it is ultimately one of the cornerstones of politics and therefore political theory.

I use the terms *wealth* and *capital* as distinct from value. In my use of the term, *wealth* can exist without being considered to be valuable (Holloway, 2015). For example, oxygen and bacteria have always been sources of wealth for humans, even if we haven't always recognised their existence. In other words, while value depends on the social recognition of worth, wealth does not. *Capital* is a set of assets that are expected to help in the generation of economic utility (Marx, 1992a). This could be a material good, a financial derivative, a social service, or a natural resource. Like value, capital is distinct from wealth in that it has to be acknowledged as valuable within the dominant economic system, while wealth isn't necessarily. However, unlike value, capital is defined as existing only *through* the whole system, that is, capital only derives its particular value due to the universal exchange of money within capitalism (Marx, 1992a). That is, while both capital and value are social evaluations of worth, value does not depend on capitalism to exist, while capital does. Further, unlike value, which is primarily a social relation, capital is a social relation embodied in the world (i.e. land, money, labour).

In the following, I survey existing theories of value, which I divide into capitalocentric and pluralist frameworks. It is important to note that this division is not intended to connote a hierarchy between them, but rather that they represent two sides of a coin.

Capitalocentric value theory

Here I divide capitalocentric approaches in terms of classical, neoclassical, and Marxist value theories. For classical economists like David Ricardo and Adam Smith, a good's value is linked to the labour time that goes into the production of it (Ricardo, 1981; Smith, 1977). Value is universal and commensurable. In neoclassical economics, however, value is determined by the relationships of supply and demand (Marshall, 1997). *Value* and *natural price* are for all intents and purposes equivalent (Jevons, 1879; Marshall, 1997). Yet, this means that it takes the 'price' as the value itself, thus, the *source* of market value is not actually explained, making it a tautological description of the meaning of value and how it is determined (Amin, 2018). In both neoclassical and classical theory, there is no theory of class (property-owning versus labourers). Value is also not determined by wider economic relationships and systems, but determined by the price of particular products (neoclassical economics) or the objectively observable labour that goes into it (classical ecnomics).

Karl Marx's value theory bears resemblance to that of classical economics, but also departs from it significantly. The main point behind Marx's value theory is that in all societies, value is determined by labour, but, because, within capitalism, the non-labouring class owns the large majority of property and the means of production, labourers are exploited from the value they produce (Wolff and Resnick, 2012: 352). Thus, value creation, within capitalism, is strongly determined by class structures. Marx agrees with classical economists that value is coupled to hours of labour that went into a product (Marx, 1992a). However, for Marx, the *structure* of labour in the economy is the central driver of the reproduction of capitalism, and thereby highly determines value itself. Another key aspect of Marx's theory of value is that capitalist value is not equivalent to the price, and, to approximate it, we have to consider the economic structure as a whole, which includes historical processes, hierarchies between owning and working classes, the appropriation of nature, and the cyclical,

self-destructive structure of capitalism. While each of the above theories seek to show how value is created within a market society, the Marxist approach stands out in that it understands individual transactions to be a reflection of the system as a whole. Therefore they, and in particular the Marxist approach, are useful for my own study as they can explain how capitalist value is created and exchanged.

Also important for my present study is the concept of reification (*Verdinglichung*, 'thingification'; Lukács, 1923). To reify is to treat something immaterial or abstract as if it was material or concrete. We can think about this in terms of the concept of material life which I introduced in the previous section. All societies engage in material life, that is, the physical, energetic, and chemical activity that supports their survival, and the social world that mediates and in turn shapes these activities. What is unique to capitalism, however, is that there is a plane of abstraction (money) that sits like a blanket on top of material life. My dog might be able to see, smell, and hear material life occurring—see me eating, walking, talking. But he is unable to understand the abstraction of money that guides my actions—though he can smell and desire a sausage, he can't understand that the sausage I sneak him under the table costs me money. Even though it is a social construct, money affects material life in concrete ways, which my dog is totally unable to comprehend, despite it structuring his whole life, and mine. This manifestation of exchange value in the day-to-day is reification. We could even say that material life is simply the world as it exists under the blanket of reified capital.

Marx's distinction between 'use-value' and 'exchange-value' is also important for the present study. According to Marx, within non-capitalistic societies, people will trade commodities largely for their usefulness or utility (use-value). The exchange-value (its price) is secondary as it is not a good in itself.[11] From this realisation, Marx set out to understand how valorisation moved around the world. This begins with processes of 'primitive accumulation', where non-capitalist wealth (natural and social) becomes forcibly appropriated and enclosed into capitalist production (Marx, 1992a). Through these dynamics, capitalist production over time evolved into a system that constantly develops and destroys capital—which Joseph Schumpeter later called 'creative destruction' (Schumpeter, 2010). In this way, capitalist value is

[11] In the following, I use the term 'capitalist value' to distinguish Marx's definition of value from 'exchange-value', and 'value' more generally, which may also exist outside of capitalism.

constantly generated, destroyed, and (re)created within capitalism through a process that Leon Trotsky called 'uneven development' (Trotsky, 2008; Löwy, 2010). Marxist urban geographers like David Harvey, Neil Smith, and Henri Lefebvre realised that this process also shaped cities; as new areas are opened for development, older urban areas become abandoned by capital investment and devalorised (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 2006; Smith, 2010; Moreno and Shin, 2018). However, this soon changes as the low value of one area can contribute once again to it becoming a desirable location for capital investment. Land—both farmland and urban land—is today creating new opportunities for value creation, as it constitutes the most significant portion of capital. This reality—the massive speculation on and financialisation of real estate worldwide, and its centrality in capitalist value—drives gentrification today (Moreno and Shin, 2018; Stein, 2019).

Marx levelled his critique against the commodity form of value, that is, capitalist value. However, in order to understand the translation from wealth to capitalist value, one must also trace the different valuations that come into play and are then funnelled into capitalist value. This is because, for 'wealth' to be turned into 'capitalist value', it must first be translated through human society before it becomes a reified relationship of exchange. At the frontier between wealth and capitalist value there are institutions for absorption of that wealth into the socially constructed world of capital. It is at this point of translation and absorption that different cultural and social values play a significant role. Limiting our definition of value to *capitalist value*, as contrasted with *value*, means missing this process of transformation. In the next section, I describe what I call *plural value theory*, which I believe can better explain this process of translation and absorption. After then describing the concept of hegemony, I then lay out a schema for how to understand the translation from wealth to capitalist value, as mediated by conflicting values, hegemonic power structures, and material life.

Plural value theory

Where classical, neoclassical, and Marxist value theories offer structural, model-based, universalist theories of economic value, there is another approach which involves understanding value as a context-based, pluralistic, and socially and ecologically embedded phenomenon. I divide this approach into anthropological, post-colonial, and ecological-economic theories of value—though these do often

overlap. Though these theories are often considered to be rather separate, I here aim to bring them together into more cohesive approach, focusing on certain points of similarity in the literature.

	Anthropology	*Post-colonial*	*Ecological economics*
Definition of value	Value is a process of meaning-making of a society.	Value is structured by hegemonic relations, a post-colonial approach requires acknowledging plural values.	Value is incommensurable and a site of political conflicts between different interests.

Table 2 Pluralist theories to value (As informed by e.g. Graeber, 2001; 2013; Spivak, 2010; Escobar, 2018; Gudynas, 2017; Martínez-Alier et al. 1998; Vatn, 2005)

Anthropological approaches

Karl Polanyi, in the book *The Great Transformation* (1944), argued that capitalism, what he called the 'market society', is actually embedded in other social institutions, such as redistribution, reciprocation, and exchange. Even when societies adopt a capitalist system, people continue to exhibit these values. Gift-giving, mutual aid, and use of symbols as stand-ins for different kinds of values predate, and continue within, capitalism. Consequentially, anthropology—the comparative study of different human societies—can be useful in helping us understand the role that value plays in all societies, whether they are capitalist or non-capitalist.

More recently, there has been a renewal in interest in developing an anthropological theory of value, as spearheaded by David Graeber (2001; 2013). For Graeber, value is not a universal but something that is always being contested. He notes that money—which is for all intents and purposes universal in any market society—is the social institution that allows for the previously-mentioned division between 'value' (universal, commensurable) and 'values' (subjective, incommensurable). What is valuable in any given society is a political question, constantly debated and struggled over. Though social values can seem all-encompassing from the outside, representing whole world-views, in practice, any individual or social group 'will find themselves constantly moving back and forth between universes' (Graeber, 2013: 229). For Graeber, value 'brings universes into

being' (Ibid, 231), that is, it is the point where hegemonic structures of power, ontology, and individual agency meet. Value becomes both the stand-in and the site of contestation for what is considered important, and what isn't—and therefore is at the heart of politics.

What does this kind of reification and contestation look like on the ground? In *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*, anthropologist Anna Tsing traces the relationships between one type of mushroom, the matsutake, and other species, ecosystems, cultures, people, and economies (2015). To do this, she is particularly interested in understanding how the matsutake is translated from its environment *into* capitalist relations. This occurs through 'translations across difference' (*ibid.*: 62), that is, taking things from their context and stripping them of those relationships in order to ascribe scalable value to them (money). Tsing calls her site of study 'pericapitalist': it is neither inside or outside, it is not beyond or totally swallowed up—a term bringing to mind Braudel's material life. As she puts it:

> ... [L]ives and products move back and forth between noncapitalist and capitalist forms; these forms shape each other and interpenetrate. The term 'pericapitalist' acknowledges that those of us caught in such translations are never fully shielded from capitalism; pericapitalist spaces are unlikely platforms for a safe defense and recuperation. (*ibid.*: 65)

In this way, capitalism functions both *despite* and *because of* an 'outside', where firms must '[take] advantage of value produced without capitalist control' (*ibid.*). This implies that there is also always necessarily a *limit* to capitalism—the commodification and privatisation of space 'is never complete; it needs shared spaces to create any value' (*ibid.*: 271). Capitalist processes can never really capture all relations into the commodity form, something always falls away or remains out of reach.

Tsing captures how different values are translated *and* untranslatable. The intermeshing of ecosystems, people, and economies within her methodology shows how these forms of wealth relate to different social values, and then may be *translated* into capitalist value. Think of, for example, the way that food gentrification, discussed in the previous chapter, involves the appropriation of people of colour's food by the gentrifiers as a commodity, which then informs the rebranding of neighbourhoods. Studying pericapitalist spaces allows Tsing to see the 'outside' that is constitutive of capitalism—which both inherently challenges it and acknowledges its dependence on

it. In this way, her method allows for an understanding of capitalism, but isn't limited to capitalocentrism. Thus, her approach destabilises binaries (capitalist / non-capitalist) and opens up space for defamiliarisation of assumptions of the ubiquity of capitalism in certain spaces—a mode of inquiry that Tsing calls 'the art of noticing' (*Ibid.*:17).

Post-colonial[12] approaches

If capitalism is embedded within a multiplicity of values, as the anthropological approach suggests, then how are we to understand these values? In her landmark essay, 'Can the subaltern speak?' Giyatri Spivak discusses how marginalised groups are rarely represented in hegemonic discourse, and their own perspectives are systematically erased (Spivak, 2010). This question is further taken up by Tuck and Yang, who argue that while the subaltern 'can speak', they are only 'invited to speak her/our pain' (Tuck and Yang, 2014a: 224). Their work, discussed above, is just one example of how post-colonial writers propose that the tendency to focus on 'marginality', 'dispossession', and 'displacement' results in research that fails to actually support the communities that researchers want to help. The role of a decolonised research agenda, then, is not to 'speak for' people, but rather to highlight how the strategies of 'subalterns' may challenge hegemonic narratives and solutions, as well as about not confounding all people as a single group, set of values, preferences, or needs.

How does this relate to the concept of value? Post-development scholars, who are closely aligned with post-colonial thought, have sought to articulate precisely those strategies and values that run counter to hegemonic Western ideology. For example, decoloniality (Mignolo, 2011) is a way of thinking that confronts, and seeks to delink from, Eurocentrism, and bring different 'cosmovisions' (Zibechi, 2010; 2012) to light. More recently, scholars are exploring the concept of the 'pluriverse' (Escobar, 2018; Kothari et al., 2019), 'a world where many worlds fit' (Escobar, 2018: xvi, quoting the Zapatistas). In this literature, scholars have sought to collect the multiple

[12] There is significant debate within decolonial, post-development, and post-colonial scholars on the right terms to use to describe their fields. These fields don't fit easily into the monikers of post-colonial, decolonial, or post-development; other terms like post-extractivism or settler colonial studies are often used as well. Here, I use specific terms when dealing with certain texts, while using the term post-colonial more broadly, even as I recognize it is not a catch-all term.

cosmovisions that run counter to capitalist, colonialist, development discourse (Kothari et al., 2019). As Eduardo Gudynas points out when discussing Indigenous, anti-extraction, and environmental movements in Latin America in the past decades:

> [I]n South America there are other positions that have become very important. The defense of a plurality of valuations concerning what Western knowledge defines as environment, and which includes aesthetic, cultural, religious, historical and ecological values, is very prominent. While these values are granted by humans, they are not necessarily linked to human utility, benefit or needs. (Gudynas, 2017: 2)

Gudynas maintains that post-colonialism also entails broadening the theory of value as it exists in Marxist and neoclassical political economy approaches. Specifically, for Gudynas, the term 'use-values' isn't sufficient to describe the sheer diversity of values expressed by decolonial movements. According to him, it is far too utilitarian or 'dependent on human interests' (Gudynas, 2017: 2). If we take the work of these post-colonial scholars seriously, we approach value not from narrow dualisms (exchange/use, human/nature) but scatter it in all kinds of directions; an abundance of values is considered.

Ecological economics

Ecological economics is a field that seeks to contextualise human economies within ecological dynamics—in doing so, it has engaged at length with post-colonial and post-development scholarship. In ecological economics, which has long perceived the need to broaden its definition of what is valuable beyond neoclassical assumptions, values are considered to be both incommensurable and in conflict (Martínez-Alier et al. 1998; Martínez-Alier and O'Connor, 1999; Martínez-Alier, 2004; 2009). Decisions about the environment are inherently political questions, existing at the nexus of different beliefs about what is important. Making the 'right' decision about resource management and governance is a matter of weighing diverse values that cannot necessarily be quantified and are inherently in dissent. For example, a mountain on an Indigenous territory can be seen as both a reservoir for quantifiable profit or is priceless and holy (Martínez-Alier and O'Connor, 1999; Temper and Martinez-Alier, 2013). In such cases, reducing one value to another—as attempted in contingent valuation or willingness to pay schemes—only serves to make what should be a political question a technocratic one. From this perspective, environmental and social justice conflicts are reconceived as 'value conflicts' (*Ibid.*),

or, situations characterised by democratic deficits, where some values are structurally prioritised. When a value conflict occurs, 'parties involved do not agree on the basic understanding of the problem, what values are at stake, and which should be given priority. There is no community across interests... The perspectives involved are incommensurable' (Vatn, 2005: 353). When dialogue across different stakeholders cannot resolve this value conflict, some may turn to social mobilisation, or conversely, those in power may resort to repression. In order to align social research with communities' needs, ecological economists have developed what they call a methodology of 'social multi-criteria evaluation' (Munda, 1995; 2008; Gerber et al., 2012).

An ecological economics perspective offers an in-between point between classical and Marxist value theory and pluralist value theory. While ecological economists acknowledge that values are plural, socially constructed, and not reducible to monetary value, many also recognise the hegemonic role that capital has in guiding and structuring most policy outcomes. In doing so, ecological economics offers methods to identify these plural values on the ground, which then leads to deliberative methods to 'weigh' different values to better influence more just and democratic policy outcomes. For example, in the growing literature on urban ecosystem services (Bolund & Hunhammar, 1999; Kronenberg, 2012; Gómez-Baggethun and Barton, 2013; Luederitz *et al.*, 2015; Kremer *et al.*, 2016), researchers are beginning to identify the non-monetary value of 'green' amenities in the city, helping policymakers to make better decisions about them.

Summary

Taken together, these plural approaches to value represent an opening, or an explosion, into a pluriverse of values. Rather than seeking to homogenise values across different scales, these scholars propose attending to the multiple values at play, and how these are translated into exchange-value. Furthermore, there is a rejection of the idea that the term 'use-value' itself is enough to describe multiple values. Multiple forms of value exist alongside capitalist institutions (private property, money), but, at any given moment, they may also act in conflict with them. Pluralist approaches help us to move beyond dominant capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham, 1996). Capitalist

values ought not to be a given, but part of a multitude of values existing on a terrain of struggle.

Taking this back to the discussion of gentrification, we can say that looking at values is a way to consider, first, how material life practices in general and foodways of poor people in particular are valued by them and shape their actions in response to gentrification; second, how the values formed through material life practices are then articulated on a political level, and how they conflict with hegemonic values (e.g. profit), and which values are then acted on and prioritised; and third, whether this process is different across contexts. In other words, to approach gentrification and material life through the question of value is to observe *how different values are made, translated, and then brought into conflict when an area appreciates in monetary value*. In terms of my own research question, this means looking at how people's foodways, as 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985), lead to political strategies of resistance to gentrification, and how they also become rolled into the capitalist valorisation of the area. I deal directly with the question of how weapons of the weak are articulated as contestations over value in Chapters 6 and 7, where I compare the experiences of the gentrified across Montreal and Vietnam.

Hegemony

Tracing how different values are shaped and transformed also means understanding the role of existing institutions—the state, legal systems, social and cultural norms—in gentrification. If gentrification is in part the struggle and translation between values—the political determination of what's important and what's not—then understanding how institutions guide decision-making is essential. In other words, tracing value translations in gentrification also involves understanding how hegemony—the assemblage of institutions that enforce consent of society's power structures—shapes gentrification.

I here draw largely from the work of Antonio Gramsci, who proposed a theory of hegemony to explain how the dominant political economy isn't just maintained by relations of exploitation between employees and employers or the use of force by the state, but is also held together by ideological, cultural, and political institutions (Gramsci, 1971). While the state may seem to be a distinct set of institutions (e.g.

parliament, ministries, public services, etc.), it also includes soft power that ensures the continued functioning of state systems on a daily basis and serves to delimit acceptable speech and action. For Gramsci, this is facilitated by 'civil society', which he defines as the collection of organisations and social institutions (universities, trade unions, the household, the education system, the press, etc.) that may seem to be separate from the state, but actually act in direct relation to it and help to ensure popular consent for its activities. These institutions act on the level of the everyday: police on the streets, social workers in the home, the media, charities, and so on. 'Hegemony' is thus the set of dominant institutions of society, which function both through formal institutions such as private property, financial capital, government departments, representative electoralism, news media, or civil society organisations, and informal institutions such as cultural norms, traditions, ideologies, or more day-to-day embeddedness of state systems in the workings of daily life.

For Gramsci, hegemony is maintained by these institutions, creating a cohesive ideology that produces, or manufactures, consent in the wider population. Rule by consent is different to rule by force: consent means that even if there are no police officers or occupying forces regularly telling people what to do, people still act according to the priorities of the hegemonic system in place. The means to produce consent are especially present in media, universities, religious institutions, and other cultural spheres (e.g. see Herman and Chomsky, 2010). Dominant class interests are therefore distributed through multiple media and in turn engineer popular opinion. Rule by consent allows dominant ideologies to seem incontrovertible and stymy the articulation of alternatives, as they are seen as violent to the order of things.

As a corollary to hegemony, Gramsci also proposed the term 'counter-hegemony'. This is the opposition to, or attempt to offer an alternative interpretation of, hegemonic reality. Essential to the formation of counter-hegemonic ideology is propaganda, offering people desirable alternatives, and people's own critical, and intellectual, engagement with their world and its power structures. Counter-hegemonic struggle takes place on the level of values and ideas as well as in the realm of material life. This 'war of position' at the neighbourhood level offers an opening to building new identities and power structures that may help to dismantle hegemony (Macdonald, 1997; cited in Pride, 2016).

Subaltern theory shares roots with Gramscian theory—the term 'subaltern' itself was borrowed by Spivak from Gramsci, who used it to describe those systematically excluded by hegemonic power structures (Morton, 2007). This line of influence between Gramsci's work and that of subaltern approaches also speaks to the breadth of the term hegemony and its applicability to non-Western contexts. Indeed, while Gramsci initially developed hegemony to understand Euro-American capitalism and the means by which the state controls its populations, the term has been applied to non-Western contexts, as in the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002), as well as to understand international relations, modern forms of imperialism, and monetary institutions, as in neo-Gramscian theory (e.g. Burnham, 1991).

In the following, I discuss four specific ways that the concept of hegemony is applied in my own research on gentrification. First, hegemonic systems determine how political action is seen and spoken about and, importantly, constrain the ability of subaltern peoples to participate in the public sphere. It is important to briefly define what I mean by 'political action.' Politics is not here seen as an engagement in the set of institutions that govern society, or the spectacle of world affairs. What I mean by politics is the capacity for people to, collectively, shape the future. One difficulty here is that political action is not always spoken or easily visible, as in a public form of deliberation, guaranteed by democratic institutions (e.g. parliament, well-organised social movements, etc.). Rather than being directly phrased in hegemonic terms, e.g. through elections, public policy, or clear demands, political action may instead take the form of 'everyday resistance', strategies based in material life such as practicing 'escape agricultures', foot-dragging, spontaneous dispersion to avoid surveillance, or other un-articulated, but coordinated, forms of subversion (Scott, 1985; 2010)—which have their roots in material life. For example, in his engagement with the debate on hegemony and the reasons for the emergence of class struggle, James C. Scott introduced the term 'weapons of the weak' to highlight how rural class conflict may not just occur through direct, obvious, political action (e.g. protests, media campaigns, strikes, etc.) but could also take place in the space of everyday life. This involves strategies like foot-dragging, doing jobs poorly, being absent when convenient, petty theft—all of which amount to an indirect undercurrent of ideological resistance. As a result, Scott argues that, though hegemonic values may seem like they are immutable,

and that only direct, opposing conflict could challenge them, they are always in conflict and being reconstructed in the sphere of everyday material life (Scott, 1985).

Thus, these 'weapons of the weak', which are by and large grounded in material life practices, are very important in studying how hegemony is reinforced and resisted. If material life does have this role in the formation of counter-hegemonic political action, especially in the Global South, then it would certainly be important to study in the context of global gentrification. If it does not, for example, have the same role in Global North as in the Global South, this would need to be explained through a deeper understanding of how hegemony relates to material life in each context.

Second, a Gramscian understanding of civil society is especially pertinent to my interest in studying material life. Within Gramsci's theory, civil society had a special place because he saw it as helping to maintain capitalist institutions without the direct role of governing institutions, the police, or other coercive actors. Where the state and the market cannot extend, civil society organisations, which are formalised through state funding bodies and legal norms, are able to manage the goings-on of everyday life and generate consent with dominant institutions, thereby limiting the possibility of resistance to capitalism and domination by the people. This is broader than the liberal and more common notion of 'civil society', which more narrowly posits it as a kind of 'third sector' or 'social economy' (Amin, 2000) beyond public or private institutions: NGOs, charities, and so on. It is important to note that this understanding of civil society is complicated by the fact that in certain countries this definition of civil society does not really exist in the same was as it does in Western societies. For example, while Vietnam does have NGOs and religious organisations, these are all highly surveilled by the state and rarely engage on the level of daily life, beyond certain development projects, and do not have membership or sustained activity on a local level (Wells-Dang, 2014). In contrast, state institutions are embedded in society, including a party cadre and other state-controlled organisations such as the Women's Union and the Farmer's Union. Analysts of the communist and post-communist political systems in East and South East Asia often speak instead of 'state-in-society' (Kerkvliet, 2001). Thus, in such contexts, it is rather the state-in-society that comprises the dominant hegemonic institutions that manage and oversee material life. While 'civil society'—in the liberal definition, used to refer to a 'third sector' separate from the state and the market—is not quite as applicable here, Gramsci's use

of the term may be more appropriate, as his use of the word tends to refer to a much broader constellation of institutions, which includes municipal and local state bodies that function to manage society and maintain hegemonic structures through the production of consent. Nevertheless, I use the term 'state-in-society' when specifically speaking of the Vietnamese context: it is more precise and may lead to less confusion. Thus, the difference in how civil society operates in each context is an important focus of research in the study of gentrification's relationship to material life.

Third, another useful term related to a Gramscian analysis of power is the 'growth coalition'. This term comes from an important paper by Logan and Molotch where the 'growth coalition' is defined as elected officials, businesspeople, rentiers, lawyers, syndicators, property brokers, and monopolistic enterprises that together maintain hegemony of the search for profits as the main function of urban governance (Logan and Molotch, 2013: 91-92). The forms this coalition takes around the world may be different than in the US, where Logan and Molotch focus their analysis. Nevertheless, there is a general tendency, especially following the massive growth of real estate as the primary sector for financial investment (Moreno and Shin, 2018), for city governance to be dominated by real estate and development to attract investment. This tendency can be characterised as the 'real estate state', a term used by Samuel Stein to describe a generalised shift of municipal governance form facilitating industrial investment and social reproduction towards one which prioritises safe investments in real estate (Stein, 2019). Indeed, while growth coalitions take different forms in different contexts, the term itself can be used in a broad sense that highlights the kind of collaborations between developers and elites that prioritise returns on investments in real estate and cement dominant hegemony in urban governance. In this study, I use the concept of growth coalition to refer mainly to the actors responsible for the expansion and development of real estate as a source of profit in a particular area. This includes real estate agents and companies, developers, urban planners, and politicians or officials allied with these actors.

Fourth, neo-Gramscian approaches are also of use here. These have been used to better understand urban governance regimes that build hegemony through strategic mobilisation of civil society, the growth coalition, and other actors (e.g. Cox, 1983; Jessop, 1997; McGuirk, 2004). Another aspect of the neo-Gramscian approach is the

insight that the state must be contextualised within changing historical developments rather than assumed to be a constant, ahistorical presence—a distinction especially pertinent to comparative urban research (Jessop, 1997; McGuirk, 2004). In addition, the neo-Gramscian approach has offered useful ways to conceive of the role of international development organisations in maintaining global economic hierarchies and dominance by the Western power bloc (Cox, 1983). From this perspective, international NGOs such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have an outsize role in driving the character of development in the Global South, as they often hold the purse-strings for major infrastructure projects, debt relief, and control over interest rates (Burnham, 1991)—a form of global hegemony. Following these approaches, I do not assume the state to be a single, unchanging force but rather a constellation of forces that transforms in reaction to events and pressures from above and below. Finally, in my research, while acknowledging the different form that civil society takes in different contexts, I also contextualise this within a recognition of the power of international development organisations and their discourse in shaping urban development and therefore gentrification globally, and especially in the Global South.

The concept of hegemony has long been applied to the study of urban development. Using it to study gentrification comparatively across different contexts can be fruitful, not least because it offers an explanation of power and capital's interaction with those systems of power that is sufficiently broad and embedded in social life. The concept allowed me to think about the difference in how foodways are valued and contested in Hanoi and Montreal. It was through the meeting between foodways and hegemonic structures that I could begin to observe how the 'underground common' (Tsing, 2015: 274)—that is, the largely unseen connections that, like mycorrhizal networks deep in the soil, support material life—can be captured in gentrification. Thus, I draw on the concept of hegemony to compare *how material life is seen, structured, enabled, and limited by hegemonic groups*—such as local officials, charity and tenants' rights groups, real estate agents, and developers. These questions are taken up at length in Chapter 7, where I discuss how hegemonic institutions interact with material life through the process of gentrification.

Schematising the interaction between material life, value, and hegemony

At this point, it is possible to bring together these different concepts and present a schema of how wealth translates into capitalist value. A few comments before laying this out more completely. As I noted above, wealth is distinct from value because it may or may not be valued in society. As soon as wealth enters the social sphere, it may be appreciated as value and therefore is subject to conflict. Likewise, capitalist value and plural values are not the same, since capitalist value depends on its circulation into exchange value and capitalist property regimes. Value is a social relation, not a thing in itself. Capitalist value is not money or price, it is a relation *mediated by* money; as Marx noted, 'money is not a *thing*, it is a social relation' (1992b: 59). Though wealth is hard to measure, we can define people's values and how they are brought into conflict in any given circumstance—since value is the social perception of wealth. Using both capitalocentric and pluralist frameworks can then help us describe how forms of wealth are created by *people*, how these relate to different value judgements, which are then brought into conflict and eventually turned into symbolic value, which capitalists can then capture for profit.

Given this, I can set forward a schema for how material life, value, and hegemony interact (see Figure 1). *First*, socio-natures, a part of which is material life, will create forms of wealth that may or may not be valuable for capital. *Second*, these forms of wealth are then turned into *value* through entering the social world of symbols, imaginaries and language—or, perhaps, they are not explicitly valued because they are not 'spoken' by subaltern groups, in the face of dominance of hegemonic value systems. From the moment they are articulated, these values may enter into a relationship with hegemonic structures and, therefore, capitalist social relations, but may also help mobilise counter-hegemonic logics, alliances, and tactics. *Third*, having entered into the social world, these forms of wealth may then be made intelligible to capital and therefore translated into reified symbols, which can then be exchanged as a commodity proper. It is at this point that wealth enters into the capitalist market of universalised exchange, and can be understood from the perspective of capitalocentric value theories. Here, too, capitalist value becomes embroiled in relations of uneven development, which in turn affect material life. Thus, a pluralist value theory must still be paired with political economic analysis. Together, these form an ambidextrous value theory.

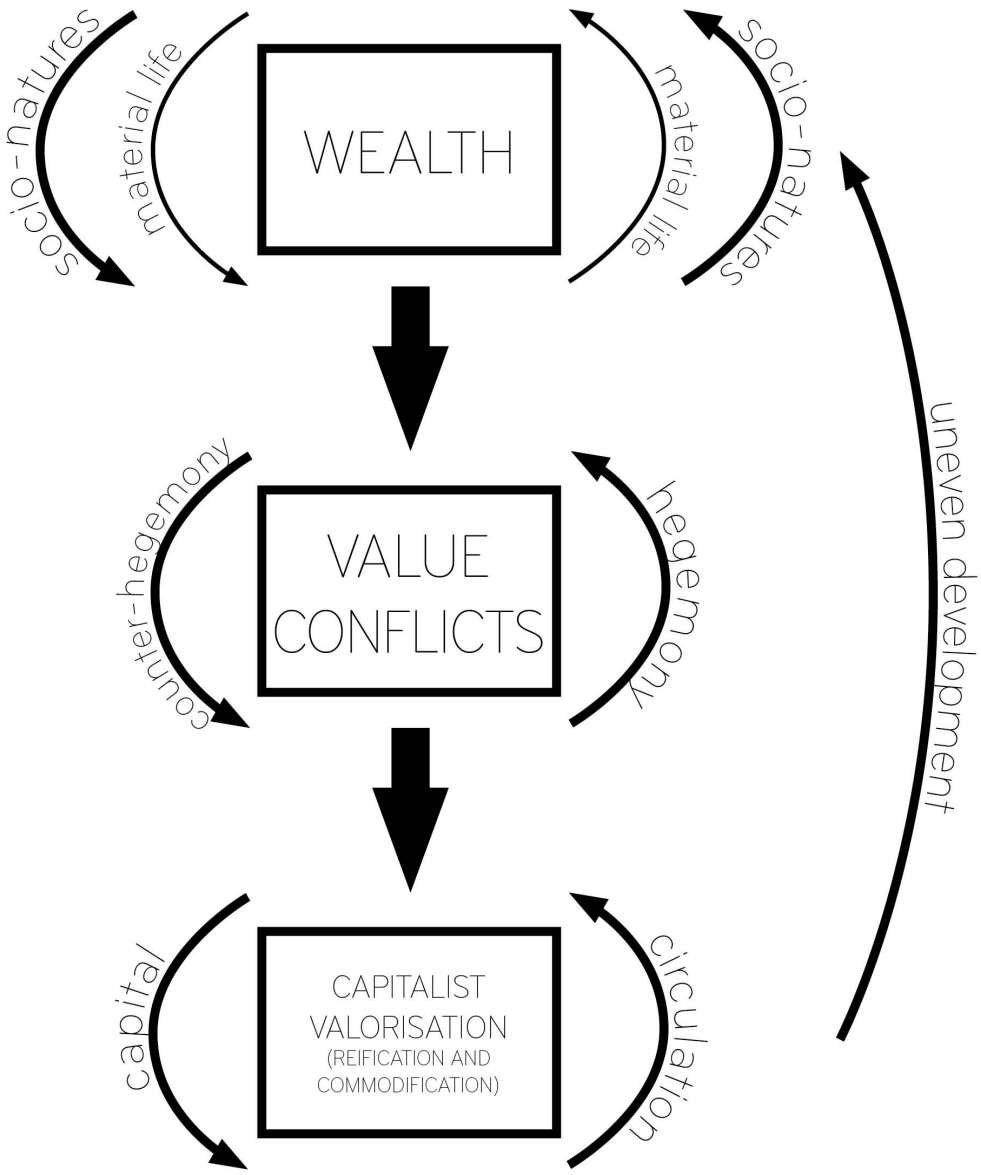


Figure 1 The role of hegemony and material life in an ambidextrous value theory
Image by the author.

Bringing together research on the role of qualitative drivers in gentrification (e.g. place-making, cultural capital, ecological gentrification, food gentrification, spatial capital, phenomenological displacement), gentrification is shown to involve the creation of different forms of wealth (by gentrifiers, the gentrified, and owners of capital), and becomes a site of value conflicts—where different people attach different values to these forms of wealth, and struggle over them. Even within these

groups, there are conflicts—some gentrifiers do not identify with capitalist value, some original, poor residents welcome the safer streets and possibility to 'move up in the world'. But the driving question is how these different values are then funnelled into more symbolic forms of value, and become subsumed as a form of profit. What is the point at which different kinds of wealth (e.g. safety, green amenities, neighbourliness) become legible as *profitable*, and turned into a commodity—leading to the transformation of the neighbourhood? The answer is, no doubt, context-based, but asking this question is central to developing a useful ambidextrous value theory. Further, an ambidextrous value theory can avoid some of the pitfalls of more 'structuralist' approaches, on the one hand, and 'demand-side' approaches on the other, by avoiding a victim narrative for the gentrified, and de-centring the values of the gentrifiers.

Conclusion

In the book *Planetary Gentrification*, Lees *et al.* note that while gentrification takes different forms in local contexts, 'the underlying commonality is the logic of capital accumulation, especially the ascendance of the secondary circuit of real estate' (2016: 59). It is indisputable that capital is the driving force behind gentrification. Indeed, this is in a sense a tautology as gentrification is precisely defined by the fact that it involves the influx of capital. Finding other commonalities can help in further clarifying the shape that global gentrification takes and the relationship that local contexts have to the reproduction of the process, and of capital, worldwide. Doing so requires an approach that is not capitalocentric in itself, that defamiliarises accepted theories, destabilises binaries, and avoids pain narratives. In this chapter, I presented the concepts central to my theoretical approach: material life, of which foodways are a component, value, and hegemony. I discussed how these concepts can elucidate the dynamics of gentrification in a way that can supplement capitalocentric approaches and at the same time has the breadth of analysis needed for doing comparative work across Northern and Southern contexts. In the next chapter, I describe the methodologies used to operationalise these concepts, after which I begin to present the case studies and the empirical research, trying to unpack how this schema plays out through gentrification.

Chapter 3

A peripheral perspective: Methods and data analysis

Introduction

Hanoi is rapidly changing: sky-scrapers regularly pop up into the horizon, whole tracts of development pave over what very recently used to be farmland on the city's outskirts, and what used to be a steady trickle of foreign investment during the communist era has turned into a cascade. Vietnam has a sizeable informal sector and its single-party government structure means that civil society—in the sense of a 'third sector' of institutions that is neither state nor market—is practically non-existent (Wells-Dang, 2010; see Chapter 2). While Vietnam is being called the 'rising dragon' of South-East Asia today (Hayton, 2010), Montréal's 'moment' was in the 1960s—marked by utopian planning projects such as the 1967 Montréal World Fair, followed by post-industrial gentrification (Ley, 1986). Today, it is seeing different kinds of urban development that capitalise on its branding as a 'cultural' capital, such as the construction of an entire 'Quartier des Spectacles' (Paul, 2004; McKim, 2012). This accelerated gentrification exists side-by-side with an extensive civil society network and ecosystem of tenant rights, rooted in social movements for the right to the city that emerged in the 1960s. These two cities are very different, that much is clear. But it is through comparison across difference that theories about urban development can be tested, and new insights can emerge.

In this chapter, I lay out the reasoning for comparing these two cities, and explain how I set about this—admittedly challenging—task. Through desire-based research, defamiliarisation, and the destabilisation of binaries, both in my case study comparison and methods, I sought to compare how gentrification impacts people's foodways on the ground. This chapter proceeds as follows: after describing my 'peripheral' approach, I discuss how it informed my case study selection, methods, and data analysis. Finally, I outline the validity and limitations of this research approach, and how I sought to address these.

Peripheral research as method for comparative urbanism

To be able to interface with the messiness of material life and subaltern strategies, field research required taking on an exploratory attitude. I took inspiration from a tradition of urban ethnography as found in Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), the work of the Situationists (Knabb, 1981), feminist geographers (Staeheli & Lawson, 1995), the techniques of geographical expeditions developed by William Bunge (1979; Merrifield, 1995), and Raúl Zibechi's scholarly journalism (2012). I was especially inspired by Aymara sociologist Silvia Riveria Cusicanqui's approach to decolonial research as a 'peripheral perspective' (Gago, 2016),[13] which is that of an outsider and passer-by trying to take things in corporeally. This means continuing the tradition of dialectic materialism of 'beginning from reality'. Verónica Gago, in her reflection on Cusincanqui's work, describes the 'peripheral perspective' as

> that of the vagabond, of the poetic figure of the *flâneur*[14] that Benjamin evoked, as a capacity to connect heterogeneous elements, thanks to the very mode of passing through, transiting, wandering. The peripheral perspective incorporates *corporeal perception.* It envelops an alert state (Gago, 2016, italics in original)

For Gago, Cusincanqui's work shows us that a peripheral perspective involves 'following the clues' and 'a mode of *collage*' (ibid., italics in original).

A key task for researchers is thus to investigate 'the metaphorical connection between research topics and lived experience' (Ibid). A 'peripheral' approach is one where the researcher is passing through but also *corporeally* engaged. This is similar to participatory observation as the research process involves a dialectic engagement between the listener and the speaker, which results in a transformation of both. However, it is also different from participatory observation as the researcher is also guided by pre-formed theoretical questions, and does not pretend that research 'gives back'. Rather, their role is simply to learn and to treat the process of transformation as a gift, rather than as an exchange. It is more similar to ethnography in that a

[13] The article I am citing is a description of Silvia Rivera Cusincanqui's work and thought by Verónica Gago. Cusicanqui's work is not widely available and rarely translated into English, and there are not many accessible texts that represent a summary of her sociological method. For this reason I rely on Gago's description, and creative interpretation, of her work.
[14] Though the *flâneur* is pejorative in French, it has been reappropriated by thinkers like Walter Benjamin to embrace the figure of the wanderer and the straggler, and *flânage* as a method of inquisition.

researcher may have a certain idea of what they're looking for, but they also follow the clues and let themselves be led by them.

In other words, trying to understand material life meant *beginning with* material life. Daily excursions with research assistants took the form of a 'derive,' an experimental method of coming to terms with and understanding the urban environment through unplanned trips (Debord, 1958).[15] We met people along the way and talked to them.[16] I took photos, recorded impressions, wrote down notes, and drew maps. When more formal interviews were necessary, we made connections by drawing on social networks—but they also often happened purely by chance. When we stopped learning anything new (saturation), we moved on to interview other kinds of people (vendors, gardeners, new residents, workers). Eventually a broader picture emerged as we made connections between interviews. We then presented that picture through photographic exhibitions and public events, and, through feedback from participants, further refined the findings and analyses. This was then paired with close reading of official documents, reports, news media, and existing peer-reviewed literature (triangulation). The research began from an initial curiosity and focus, which then involved looking for clues and connecting them through detective work. By starting with material life, things like the state, hegemony, gentrification, and value translation and conflicts came into view—and something like the political appeared. In this way, a 'peripheral perspective' guided my case study selection, research methods, and analysis.

Cusicanqui's approach also relates closely to feminist and contemporary anthropological research methods, which involve an acknowledgement of positionality, subjectivity, and power relationships in the research process, analysis, and production of results (Valentine, 2002; Rose, 1997; Nast, 1994; Staeheli & Lawson, 1994; 1995). The practice of developing knowledge that is site-specific and contextual also has shared roots in the practice of 'exploratory geography' (Bunge, 1979; Merrifield, 1995). For William Bunge, geographical exploration could 'bring global problems down to earth, to the scale of people's normal lives' (Bunge, 1979: 170; cited in Merrifield, 1995: 53). This involved exploring the 'hidden landscape' of

[15] On walking as method of inquiry, see Augoyard, 1979; but also see Heddon and Turner, 2012; Bates and Rhys-Taylor, 2017 for a critical perspective on the gendered assumptions of walking as method.
[16] I switch between 'we' and 'I' to differentiate the work I did with research collaborators. Thus, though the project was firmly my own, I wish to clearly acknowledge their role in contributing to the research.

the home and 'everyday crap' (*Field Manual*, n.d.; Oldenburg, 1990: 728; cited in Merrifield, 1994: 57-58). The production of knowledge by the researcher is certainly contingent on their own background and position of privilege, nevertheless, reflexivity around these positions makes reconfiguring them possible (Rose, 1997). There is also a shared orientation with urban ethnography (Duneier, 2014; Anderson, 2009), where the researcher engages with people's daily practices, and New Journalism, a form of investigative reporting that makes use of prose techniques more commonly used in fiction to bring subjects to life, which is also equally informed by deep embededness in—and empathy for—people's lives (Wolfe and Johnson, 1975).

Peripheral research is especially fruitful for the study of material life and foodways in gentrification. Through its corporeal engagement and its openness, it aligns well with how people engage with material life: through messy, unplanned daily interactions. Engaging with people's material life also has the benefit of giving insight into the things that remain unsaid or, rather, unspeakable, and gaining a deeper understanding of how people seek to protect, on a daily basis, that material life. Studying foodways is particularly amenable to a peripheral approach, as foodways are seen as embedded in cultural and social practices (Alkon *et al.*, 2013), including people's motivations and habits in terms of what and where they eat, and how food structures their lives. Through this experiential, exploratory learning, hegemony and value appear at the level of daily life, rather than as abstract concepts removed from experience. The researcher thus passes through and mediates different experiences, places, and concepts, thus allowing material life's connection to gentrification to reveal itself.

Comparing two cities through defamiliarisation

Apart from being well-suited for studying material life, this approach also informed my case study selection criteria, research methods, and data analysis. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'defamiliarisation' involves 'pedagogies of writing, talking, seeing, walking, telling, hearing, drawing, making — each of which pairs the subject and the object in novel ways to enliven the relationship between them and to better express life in motion' (Mbembe and Nutall, 2004: 352). I sought to avoid strict comparison, instead, it was in the incommensurability between case studies, and the strange connections, that interesting things happened. In other words, that the case

studies were so different was not seen as an issue for comparison, but as an opening for possibility for new things to be noticed. This jarring difference between the two sites, and the focus on material life, therefore made the research project amenable for a peripheral perspective.

This approach of being open to difference and unfamiliarity fits with what is often called 'most-different, most-similar' comparative design in case study research. My comparative approach was intended to explore how people's material strategies are differently shaped by local political economies, which can then bring to light the role of the state and other hegemonic institutions in shaping gentrification and people's responses to it. Thus, my case study selection was guided by several concerns. For one, they should vary greatly according to their hegemonic political economic structure. Accordingly, I sought two cities with very different histories. Because I wanted to familiarise myself with the day-to-day lives of residents and people working in the area, it seemed appropriate to, in each city, focus on neighbourhoods where people have been living for a long time—and where old and new residents live alongside each other. This would allow me to learn about the historical process and how life has changed through the developments. Indeed, a peripheral perspective proved especially amenable to working with elderly people, who have many stories to tell and a unique perspective on urban development, and who often rely on public space to maintain community connections. These dissimilarities and similarities would encourage the defamiliarisation of both case studies, while encouraging unexpected connections to appear through corporeal engagement.

The cities of Hanoi and Montreal corresponded well to these criteria. From my own prior knowledge of both cities, and connections with organisations and research institutes, it was clear that comparison would yield interesting results. Where Montreal has highly formalised property institutions, state services, civil society, and trade, Hanoi has both informal trade, which significantly shapes property rights, and an absence of welfare systems and civil society organisations. Canada's governance is largely based on liberal values, a parliamentary system, and relative provincial autonomy; governance in Vietnam is directed through a Leninist vanguard party, with top-down control and only marginal freedom for local and provincial officials. However, in both cases, many neighbourhoods saw a substantial shift in the socio-

economic demographic makeup, a change in built environment, and the influx of capital—in other words, gentrification.

In Montreal, upscaling occurs in already-urbanised areas, while in Hanoi, a city that is rapidly expanding into the urban periphery, upgrading may also occur in peri-urban villages becoming absorbed into the urban fabric. In Montreal, studies over several decades have documented the advance of gentrification through different boroughs. The adjacent boroughs of Saint-Henri and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) were identified as 'gentrification frontiers' using census data from the early 2000s (Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003; Walks and Maraanen, 2008a), and updated census data indicates that, especially in Saint-Henri, gentrification has advanced significantly (Twigge-Molecey, 2009; 2013). In Hanoi, the previously peri-urban district of Tay Ho has been identified as an up-and-coming 'creative quarter' (Rosen, 2014; The Word, 2016), and it is one of the three areas of the city with the highest property prices (Comber *et al.*, 2016). The neighbourhood of Linh Dam was one of the first to see large-scale new-build development for private ownership in the 1990s. In these neighbourhoods, there continued to be a significant presence of original and low-income residents—necessary for the investigation of how people cope with gentrification. In Montreal, the neighbourhoods of Saint-Henri and NDG do have a high proportion of social housing and rent control, allowing many low-income residents to stay in the area; while in Hanoi, due to unique post-communist property regime, low-income residents may still own title to the land, even if this is the only capital they have available. In the case of Linh Dam, the new urban area completely encloses original villages, and many incumbent residents have stayed, though they did lose their farmland to development. Thus, both Montreal and Hanoi, and the two areas in each city, were seen as a good fit for comparative, peripheral research.

	Montreal	Hanoi
Gentrification is taking place	✓	✓
Presence of long-term low-income population	✓	✓
Gentrification is largely taking place in the developed urban core	✓	×
Presence of civil society	✓	×
Highly formalised labour sector	✓	×
Highly formalised property regime	✓	×
Welfare state	✓	×

Table 3 Similarities and differences between case sites

Operationalisation of theoretical framework

Using the definitions of material life, foodways, hegemony, and value outlined in Chapter 2, I identified several ways that these concepts could play out and be observed more practically (see Table 4). For example, though 'material life' may be quite broad as a concept, practices of mutual aid, socio-natural wealth (e.g. relationships between people and their environment that provide support and ensure survival), and foodways can be considered more concrete manifestations. Approaching these more observable aspects, in turn, could involve, for example, open-ended walks, interviews, photography, more structured questionnaires, and learning about how material life has changed over time through historical narratives. In contrast, while material life and foodways may be more visible through personal interaction and engagement, hegemony and value, though also visible on the level of the everyday, also benefit from investigating more 'formal' channels, such as official documents, reports, news articles, and interviews of officials. Likewise, these structures also may be made more visible through research strategies like meetings and workshops, where people are encouraged to articulate their beliefs more clearly through conversation with colleagues and neighbours, and where power dynamics between people (e.g. men and women, residents with different levels of access to institutional power) can more clearly shape and guide conversation. Values are especially difficult to observe, in great part because they are often not articulated directly. It is for this reason that I was interested in 'weapons of the weak', 'everyday resistance', and 'commoning' as they play out in people's foodways, as they can often be a site where the unspoken values of subaltern and marginalised groups are embodied and performed (see Chapter 2). Noticing conflicts between hegemonic and subaltern values requires reading between the lines, being attentive to the everydayness of resistance. Here again, on-site observation and guided walks can be especially illuminating—as these depend on building relationships and getting to know people in an intimate way.

Concept	Definition	Observable features	Operationalisation
Material life	The everyday resources, habits, and wealth that exist both outside of and are in relationship to systems of monetary exchange and state institutions.	Foodways Mutual aid Socio-natural wealth	Exploratory walks Guided walks On-site observation Interviews Photography Questionnaires
Foodways	The everyday uses of food, which acknowledges food as an active, mobile substance, which has more-than-material properties, and carries varied cultural meanings.	Food spaces Food habits and rituals Gardening Gift-giving (with food) Food buying and preparation	Interviews Guided walks On-site observation Exploratory walks Photography Questionnaires
Hegemony	The political, ideological, and cultural institutions that hold together dominant political economic structures. These include government and market institutions, as well as civil society, patriarchy, tradition, and social norms. The important part is that these institutions are embedded, in one way or another, in daily life.	State officials Real estate agents Power dynamics Censorship and self-censorship NGO and civil society activity	Discourse analysis of grey literature Meetings Guided walks Interviews On-site observation Photography
Value	A social relation which identifies what is important or good in a given society or context. Values are always in conflict and therefore are a central feature of 'the political'. However, they are not always spoken but may be enacted or performed through daily life practices.	Spoken: Rationales, official statements, public protest actions Unspoken: Things left unsaid, weapons of the weak, everyday resistance, commoning	Discourse analysis of grey literature Meetings Guided walks Interviews On-site observation Photography

Table 4 Operationalisation of key concepts

Research ethics

As part of a peripheral, grounded approach, I also wanted to ensure that my research practice was ethical and consensual—that the people whose lives I was engaging with would not be harmed through my research. I sought to ensure that basic requirements for ethical research were met throughout the project.

Vietnam and Canada differ in terms of censorship and risk for individuals when discussing politically sensitive topics. For example, the potential impacts of a state official learning that a resident talked to a researcher about being expropriated are much higher in Vietnam than in Canada, due to Vietnam's authoritarian police state. In addition, prior and informed consent looks different in both locations, because there is a very different understanding of research and its distribution. For example, in Vietnam, people were not used to signing a consent form and, in fact, it made people think the research was a government initiative and thus led to less easy conversations. Certain practices of prior and informed consent are therefore not always transferrable across contexts. I also wanted to think about the extent to which informing people about the research process is really possible. In both places, many people interviewed may not understand what a doctoral dissertation or an academic journal article is. How can people give informed consent for something of which they don't know its full ramifications? Further, prior and informed consent looks different today, with the advent of facial recognition software and internet search engines, which can easily bring up information that participants may prefer to keep private. As a result, I tried to develop an ethical approach to research that worked for both locations, varying slightly when necessary (see Appendix I).

Interviews were an important site for thinking through research ethics. In general, there were two kinds of interviews. Unplanned interviews involved research participants with whom we had no prior communication (phone, email, close familiarity). To ensure anonymity and comfort of the participants, these interviews were neither recorded, nor were field notes taken. At the end of the interview, we would go out of sight, go over the conversation, and discuss what happened, which was then recorded. I would also take notes during our conversation, transcribing what was said when possible. This also helped with the iterative process of analysis

discussed below, as this would be a chance for us to talk about our impressions of the interview. When conducting planned interviews, we would interview people with whom we had shared our contact details and with whom we had shared a document explaining the research project. In this case, we would do audio recordings of the interview and take notes during meetings. These people were more informed about the project and knew how to contact us if there were any issues about information being shared.

In all cases, names of interviewees were anonymised and protected. Identifying details were obscured as much as possible, such as the organisations interviewees worked with. However, more public organisations like the local government were not anonymised. So, for example, when a local food bank was mentioned by an interviewee, I did not anonymise the name of that food bank, but, if I interviewed a staff member of that same food bank, I did not include the name of the food bank to preserve the interviewee's anonymity. In addition, photos were not taken of participants' faces, unless they were specifically asked and they gave clear consent or if they asked for a photo (which happened in several instances). However, even when photos were identifiable (either by location or facial recognition), I took care not to distribute these in any public setting, cropping photos when there were some identifiable features. All anonymous participants were given pseudonyms. Pseudonyms corresponded to ethnicity and gender and were selected by myself in the case of Montreal, and by Van in the case of Hanoi. In Hanoi, pseudonymous names were also accompanied by honorifics, or kinship pronouns.[17] Accordingly, when I introduced and wrote about research participants in Hanoi, I also included the appropriate pronouns.

Throughout my research, I wanted to build relationships of trust with participants. This is in line with the effort to be consensual in the research process; consent

17 For interviewees in Hanoi I used honorifics, which denote the age, gender, and social position of the interlocutor.

Honorific	*Literal meaning*	*Non-kinship usage*
em	younger sibling	a person who is a little younger
chị	older sister	a woman who is a little older
anh	older brother	a man who is a little older
bạn	friend	friend (usually used for someone in your age category)
ông	grandfather	a middle-aged or older man
bà	grandmother	a middle-aged or older woman
cô	father's younger sister	a woman who is a little younger than one's parent
chú	father's younger brother	a man who is a little younger than one's parent
bác	parent's older sibling	a man who is a little older than one's parent

requires trust first and foremost. It also is a requirement for peripheral research: though one is 'passing through', *corporeal* engagement requires an ethics of openness, understanding, and solidarity. Strategies to build trust were manifold. Important for the research was gift-giving. We were beneficiaries of gifts from many participants; especially in Hanoi, I also carried around tokens such as chocolate and notebooks for participants. In Montreal, research often took the form of 'sweat equity' (Sbicca, 2015), where we partnered with local organisations to help them with certain tasks, such as collecting surveys or facilitating workshops. Refusal (Tuck and Yang, 2014a; 2014b) was also an important aspect of this. People refused to be interviewed or to talk about certain subjects. It was possible that people who talked to us could have personal repercussions if they did so, especially in Hanoi. In all cases we sought to listen carefully and pay attention to tone, and allow people to volunteer information, rather than asking sensitive questions. All of this was, I felt, important for research that sought to engage with the world of material life under gentrification—without a practice of consent, acknowledging refusal, and relationships of trust, I would not be able to understand the value conflicts that take place when a neighbourhood gentrifies, or see the role that material life has in people's lives during this process.

Data collection and analysis

Research involved on-site observation, semi-structured interviews and street questionnaires of residents and shopkeepers, guided walks, and observation of public spaces and homes. Research also involved semi-structured interviews of experts, civil society actors, and local officials; meetings of residents, researchers, or civil society groups; attendance at public events; and discourse analysis of grey literature such as government documents, news articles, and student reports. In total, the research involved 352 participants—166 in Hanoi and 186 in Montreal. In Table 5 below I list the total numbers of participants involved in my study, including through interviews, questionnaires, meetings, and events (See Appendix A for a full, anonymised list of participants). The research also involved photography, which then was presented at public events in each location, encouraging further feedback from locals. Research was conducted together with Nguyen Hong Van (Hanoi) and Lucie Le (Montreal), whose own insights also contributed greatly to data collection, evaluation, and cross-triangulation of research findings (more on that below).

In Table 6 below I outline the chronology and specific outcomes of different methods. Data collection and analysis happened in several layers, starting with preliminary research in August 2015, and data analysis was completed by August 2019. Field research in Hanoi took place from October 2016 to April 2017, the research in Montréal occurred from April 2017 to August 2017. These times were chosen because they were during the growing seasons, as well as some of the more active times of the year in each location (in Hanoi, the summer months can be too hot, while in Montreal, the winter is too cold). This of course affects the kinds of data I gathered. As indicated, some methods occurred earlier in each phase of field research (e.g. dérives), and some later on (e.g. public events). In the following, I outline my data analysis methods, which were iterative and often occurred simultaneously with the data collection itself.

Method type	Hanoi	Montreal
Interviews	91 participants	136 participants
Questionnaires of residents	60 participants	30 participants
Meetings (workshops, focus group discussions)	2 meetings (9 participants; 6 participants)	2 meetings (8 participants; 12 participants)
Events (open events, protests, field trips, presentations, guided walks)	16 events	7 events
Public event (self-organised)	1 (80-100 attendees)	1 (18 attendees)
Subtotal participants (not counting events and public event)	166	186
Total participants (not counting events and public events)		352

Table 5 Participants in the study

This includes interviews, questionnaires, meetings, and events. People attending our public event and people at events we attended are not included in the total.

Methodology	Outcome	Chronology		
		Aug 2015-Oct 2016 (Research design)	Oct 2016-Aug 2017 (Field research)	Aug 2017-Aug 2019 (Analysis)
Literature				
Preliminary research	Research design, understand context, identify key actors, identify grey literature			
Grey literature	Understand context			
Field research				
Research collaborators	Translate context, interpret, analysis			
Dérives	Observation		Earlier	
Interviews	Observation			
Photography	Observation			
On-site observation	Observation			
Meetings	Observation		Later	
Questionnaires	Observation		Later	
Analysis				
Field notes	Process and record information, identify patterns			
Recordings	Record information			
On-the-ground analysis	E.g. conversations with research collaborators: Process information, identify patterns			
Public events	Process information, identify patterns, test findings		Later	Earlier
Transcription and categorisation	Process information, identify patterns			

Table 6 Chronology and outcome of methods and analysis

Research collaborators

Before I introduce the various sources of data I collected from, I would like to discuss the central role of research collaborators in the project in depth. Though I developed, and was the principal investigator for, the project from start to finish, working with research collaborators was key for data collection and analysis. Lucie Le was a Masters student in Urban Planning at the Université de Montréal, and she joined the research as part of her final project for her degree; payment for her work was split between the university and myself. Nguyen Hong Van was hired by myself as an independent researcher and professional interpreter, at the time based in Hanoi. Lucie is fluent in French and English and Van in Vietnamese and English; much of their work involved translation and interpretation. But this was not their only role. Lucie and Van both were of great help in organising the public events (for Lucie, this was in fact part of her final assignment for her degree). And in both cases, we did almost all of the field research together; this helped me to go over the findings, test assumptions, and understand and interpret data. Thus, while I was the principal investigator, designed the project, and analysed the large majority of the data, collaboration with Van and Lucie was an essential part of the research. Further, this collaboration went beyond interpretation alone, as both Van and Lucie were given space to provide their own analysis and contribute to the project beyond the initial research design (for example, Van organised several public events on her own initiative, and Lucie organised a public event and wrote her own final thesis on the project).

These collaborations were also important for dealing with dynamics of positionality. Throughout the field research process we would discuss how each of our own identities and positions influenced our findings. Especially in Hanoi, where my own perspective, as well as my limited understanding of Vietnamese, was a barrier to perceiving interpersonal, social, and cultural dynamics, the process was greatly informed by Van's perspectives. To provide space for these perspectives, as well as ensure a transparent, flexible, and communicative working relationship with both collaborators, I planned review meetings where I asked Lucie and Van to give me feedback about the research process and share how they were experiencing it. These sessions were especially important to tease apart some of the interpersonal dynamics between myself, the research collaborator, and the participants, especially

in relation to our positionality (Aaron: white, Belgian, male, middle class, high education; Van: Vietnamese, female, older than me, high education; Lucie: French of Vietnamese-Chinese origin, female, older than me, high education). These meetings should themselves be seen as part of the methodology and data analysis, as these sessions greatly informed my own understanding of what we were finding out, and were a means to address concerns of personal bias in the research process. This went both ways, as the meetings created a space for each of us to challenge our preconceptions and understanding of our observations, as well as identify gaps and next steps, and process our observations. These meetings therefore became an opportunity for doing analysis during the field research itself and strengthening the reliability of our data.

Another collaboration was a qualitative research workshop in Hanoi with 12 undergraduate students and four lecturers from the National University of Civil Engineering—Department of Urban Planning (see Appendix E for a description of the workshop). On the first day, students received lectures and workshops on qualitative methods. During the second day, the students conducted 60 open-ended questionnaires in one 'hamlet' of Nhat Tan with our direction. I explain the design of the questionnaires and how their results were used further below. During the third day, they were tasked with analyzing the data and doing a public presentation of their findings. Students were also asked to take photos and then narrate these as stories to the group (also explained further below). Students and lecturers were refunded for food, transportation, and other costs (stationery, etc.). The lecturers also arranged a meeting with local hamlet leaders. This collaboration thus was extremely beneficial for getting more insight, from the perspective of students, into the dynamics of gentrification and urban development.

Later, following the completion of the field research, I also hired Tran Tue Minh, at the time a Masters student in Regional Planning at Cornell University, to do follow-up research on real estate advertising and Hanoi history—which I was not able to do given my limited Vietnamese. Under my close direction, Minh did research on the following: creating timelines for the development of two neighbourhoods, the history of the phrase *tấc đất tấc vàng*, the content of real estate advertisements in several neighbourhoods, and translation of key quotes identified in grey literature such as statistics reports in Vietnamese, which Van and I had identified before. I used the

timelines to better describe the case studies in cases when I was unable to read media articles (Chapter 4); the history of the phrase to inform my own research on it from secondary sources (Introduction); the content of real estate advertisements to better understand how green amenities were presented by the real estate sector in Hanoi (Chapter 7); and the translations of reports to both describe statistical information about each case study neighbourhood (Chapter 4) and to analyse the way by which the state saw material life (Chapter 7). I also encouraged Minh to write a few sentences of reflections on each task, which was also very helpful in informing my own analysis.

Because of these collaborations, in the proceeding chapters I will switch between using 'I' (where the work and analysis was largely done by myself) and 'we' (where I worked with either Van, Lucie, Minh, or the students). I also specify if an insight or observation was Van's, Lucie's, Minh's, or the students' own contribution. Again, though these collaborations were a crucial part of the research, the research design, analysis, and argumentation, is solely mine. Nevertheless, I have tried to be clear about how these collaborations informed the research, as the work of research assistants is often under-valued, especially in North-South and gendered contexts (Turner, 2010; Caretta, 2015; Nguyen, unpublished[18]).

Sources of data

In the following, I list how data was collected throughout my project. Before I begin, it may be helpful to outline how these different forms of data collection fit different aspects of the research and where they were presented in this dissertation (see also Tables 2 and 6). Grey literature was most useful for first contextualising each case study (Chapter 4) and then to better understand how material life was seen or invisibilised by hegemonic structures (Chapter 7). Dérives, participatory observation, interviews, meetings, photography, events, questionnaires, each informed all aspects of my analysis, making up the broad majority of the data presented in Chapters 5 (foodways and material life), Chapter 6 (how material life linked to political action), and Chapter 7 (how material life was shaped by hegemony and value translations). However, semi-structured interviews (e.g. with experts, civil society

[18] This last reference is an unpublished article written by collaborator Nguyen Hong Van, reviewing the literature on the role of research assistants in field research, with reflections on her own experience as a research assistant, available on request.

actors, and officials) were particularly useful for understanding the role of hegemony and the value conflicts that take place. In turn, meetings, photography, events and questionnaires were useful also as forms of triangulation, data analysis, and generally testing the different themes I had started to identify and my broader theorisation of the data.

Grey literature

After preliminary research, it became clear that there were distinct differences in the amount of academic research and demographic data that was publicly available regarding each case study location. This data was important to assess the advance of gentrification in each place. Montreal participates in a full census, the results of which are available through Statistics Canada, and can be analyzed by neighbourhood and borough. Though Hanoi does conduct a census, detailed results are only available in an annually published book and neighbourhood-level demographics (including relevant statistics about income, poverty levels, changes over time) are not available. In Montreal, there are widely available studies by local organisations and government institutes. In Hanoi, by contrast, such studies are not publicly accessible and often require institutional access or, in many cases, personal connections. This was problematic, not just because of the issue of comparability across case studies, but because I was much more familiar with the Montreal context and any more localised information in Hanoi would have been helpful to improve my understanding of local development dynamics.

Despite this gap, Van was able to identify a large number of student research papers, some of them available online, others only available to students and professors in Hanoi Universities, which included local demographic and economic data, as provided directly by the local ward. These research papers were vetted by local officials and rarely included information that did not fit acceptable party discourse. For example, there was little information about populations of migrants (estimated by some at 30% of the population), evictions, or land disputes against the government. Together we analysed these documents and identified relevant data, of which Tran Tue Minh then translated relevant quotes. This data was then used as a proxy for existing official data and, often, hegemonic attitudes toward urbanisation processes (further discussed in Chapter 7).

Dérives and guided walks

Part of the research was doing regular, largely undirected walks or motorbike rides in the case study areas. We would stop and talk to people, or return to a place where we had been before and explore it further. This is similar in form to the *dérive* (drift) developed by the Situationist International: 'In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there' (Debord, 1958). These walks were often unexpected in their results, but they were also physical and confrontational, forcing me to reassess previous assumptions on a daily basis. A chance interaction with a resident turned into a wild goose chase to find her farm, guided by unclear directions and memorised landmarks; a brief chat with two unemployed men sitting on the stoop turned uncomfortably jovial several beers later. In this way, 'the very mode of passing through, transiting, wandering' helped me to get a feeling for people's daily lives—looking beyond what they said to what they are doing, what Silvia Rivera Cusincanqui calls 'corporeal perception' (Gago, 2016). Doing this was essential for my study as I sought to explore the role of material life in gentrification; how it either builds resistance or becomes part of the revalorisation process. For the purpose of data collection, these unguided *dérives* helped me gain familiarity with the area, identify possible interviewees, and observe how people use public space. In addition, in both Montreal and Hanoi, we did guided walks through the neighbourhood with interviewees, which further helped us familiarise ourselves with the dynamics of development and community activity within the neighbourhood, as well as get a picture of the neighbourhood's development from the eyes of a long-time resident.

Interviews

The study involved two kinds of interviews, each of which were semi-structured. First, there were interviews of people we met rather spontaneously through the dérives, most often residents and vendors. We would approach people on the street, at food stalls, gardening, or just hanging out on their porch, and talk to them for 10-45 minutes. After the interview we would go out of sight and record ourselves summarising the interview, and I would take notes. Interviews often led to further

connections or places to investigate, which we would then follow up on later. Second, there were more formal, planned interviews of politicians, officials, experts (researchers, consultants, people with significant experience such as retired officials), or civil society staff. These were pre-arranged by phone call or email, and often took between 1-2 hours. Contacts were found through personal connections, identification of key actors through preliminary research, or Facebook announcements (e.g. on local Facebook groups in Montreal asking for people who were interested in participating in the study; in Hanoi, Van posted on her personal Facebook account asking if anyone knew any residents who would like to be interviewed). These interviews took place in pre-determined places such as offices, restaurants, or cafes, and sometimes by phone. During these interviews I would often take audio recordings and notes, except if no vocal consent was given. Even so, we would also go over these interviews afterwards.

Interviews were intended to determine the relevant social issues and dynamics in each case study, what kind of food spaces existed in the neighbourhood and were used by the low-income community, the perceived benefits of food spaces and the valuation of them by different interviewees, how development has affected these spaces according to them, and how they have changed over time (see Appendix B for an interview guide, with sample questions). Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached (Small, 2009). We interviewed 91 people in Hanoi and 136 in Montreal, with a total of 227 interviews (see Table 5, above, Table 7 below; see Appendix A for a full anonymised list of participants).

The criteria for selecting interviewees included members of the public, private, and civil society sectors, and people who had extensive knowledge about the development processes, had been engaged in community activities, knew the neighbourhood well and had lived there for a long time, and/or were directly involved with development plans. In all cases, interviews were only recorded with explicit permission from the interviewee. In many cases, we would repeat the interview from memory to each other later and record it. This was to ensure that we could still learn from interviewees who not be recorded directly, and would not feel uncomfortable with note-taking, while ensuring that we could document our conversations. In any case, however, we never interviewed anyone without their explicit consent and without making them aware that we were interviewing them for a research project on

the impacts of gentrification or, when they might not understand that term, local changes.

Participant type	Hanoi	Montreal
Resident	39	83
Vendor, shopkeeper, or service sector worker	18	29
Civil society	2	20
Developer / real estate agent	5	1
Politician / official	4	3
Expert / researcher	23	0
Subtotal interviews	91	136
Total interviews		227

Table 7 Kinds of interviews

On-site and participatory observation

After the first phase of *dérives* and semi-structured interviews, we selected locations within each neighbourhood that corresponded most to our research objectives. On-site observation was conducted in homes, businesses, events (such as protests), community spaces, public space, public markets, and informal spaces (such as garden plots or alleyways). We attended events like community meetings, protests, information sessions, lectures, film screenings, exhibitions, and neighbourhood parties. When possible, we informed people that we were researchers and told them about our project, and made sure that we had consent to be where we were, and that people knew that they could refuse to participate if they wished. On-site observation was different from dérives as it involved a much more intentional engagement with the site. In certain cases we used participatory observation (LeCompte and Schensul, 2010) because it increases the possibility of understanding some of the dynamics occurring in the neighbourhood. When possible, we approached staff, employees, or organizers to ask for formal permission. For example, when attending public events in Montreal such as protests, we first established connections with the organising groups informing them that we wanted to attend. When conducting on-site observations in community gardens, we first talked to gardeners and through them asked to speak to the director of the garden. In Hanoi, things were much different, as there are really two systems: a formal, state system involving officials, and an informal system of common management. For example, at public markets, we found it impossible to meet with the manager, who refused to talk to us on several occasions. It was often difficult to meet with officials without the right connections or resources. Thus, on-site observation provided insight into local contexts and foodways, as well as building

trust with participants (see Appendix I describing ethics practices for each method and case study).[19]

With respect to my research objectives, the goals of participatory and on-site observation were to understand how food spaces are contested, the role of different actors and organisations, the role of intersectional forms of oppression in determining power relations, how values were conflicting both in these spaces and between these spaces and other actors, and how these spaces were embedded within wider foodways, foodscapes, and food networks in the neighbourhood. In conducting on-site and participatory observation research, I kept in mind the possibility for research to be a form of 'sweat equity' (Sbicca, 2015) to support local food justice initiatives. It should however be noted that this kind of participatory observation was not planned from the beginning, and emerged essentially as a result of the same 'peripheral perspective' as an active and corporeally engaged researcher.

Questionnaires

We also conducted questionnaires targeted at local residents. The goal of these questionnaires was to have a clearer idea of the foodways of low-income residents, the reasons for using particular food spaces, the extent of use of different spaces, the perceived benefits, how food spaces changed over time, and how they had perceived the effects of development on where they access food. The benefit of using questionnaires over semi-structured interviews was that they were shorter and required less time to conduct, and the information obtained was more easily coded and self-consistent (see Appendix D for a sample of the questionnaires distributed). I designed these questionnaires more like 'vox populi' questionnaires, that is, 15-20 minute interviews that allowed us to talk to many people directly on the street. The questionnaires were first tested on a smaller sample in each neighbourhood, and then

[19] In Montreal, we worked specifically with the NDG Food Depot through participatory observation. Lucie and I wanted to observe their programming and support them in their activities in any way. After some discussion, they offered that we could help them by conducting questionnaires and doing interviews with participants of the organisation's diverse programming. Together, we conducted 30 questionnaires, and, in doing so, we participated in their weekly basket distribution (which includes lunch and coffee for users), veggie basket stalls, community gardens, and community kitchen events at senior residences. These questionnaires were then used for their annual reports on their activities, and were targeted towards assessing users' experience of their events, and users' personal situations. However, these questionnaires were for use of the organisation only, and their contents could not be shared in any way. Nevertheless, we were free to participate in these events and note down general remarks and observations. This was one way that I hoped that my research could contribute to local initiatives, by offering to support the Depot with my experience in interviewing.

adjusted according to the feedback received. In total, 60 questionnaires were conducted in Hanoi and 30 in Montréal (15 each in Saint-Henri and NDG). In Hanoi, surveying was conducted by 12 students, as described above. In Montreal, we conducted questionnaires of local residents by walking through areas still dominated by low-income housing, such as western Saint-Henri and southern NDG. We would approach people walking on the street or sitting in front of their house and, once they were told about our research and seemed comfortable with talking more, ask if they were interested in doing a quick survey. For part of the survey process, we also teamed up with a community worker at the NDG Community Council who was interested in getting to know more residents in their target neighbourhood.

Results from the questionnaires were not considered representative or even generalisable. In fact the subject matter made it extremely difficult to make generalisable conclusions from the results. For example, though questions on the questionnaire included money people spent on food per month, answers were highly varied and often people were simply unable to answer the question. Money spent on food per month was also entirely incomparable across case studies—in Hanoi, this is not a very accurate indicator of poverty since people often get much of their food from acquaintances, gardening, or as gifts. As the economic and social contexts differed so much in Hanoi and Montreal, it was much more useful to make broader claims than direct comparisons.

Because of different social norms and cultural contexts, questionnaires in Montreal and Hanoi were worded differently. Not only were they translated into French and Vietnamese, there were also significant differences in indicators of wealth and daily expenditures. For example, in Montréal we found that whether a resident used a credit or debit card to buy food could be seen as an indicator of their financial situation as many low-income people don't have a credit or debit card, while in Hanoi it was too rare for anyone to use a credit card and so this question was left out. Conversely, in Hanoi cooking and petrol gas expenditures were significant, while this was not as common an expenditure in Montreal, where low-income people largely rely on public transport and use electric stoves.

Meetings

Research also involved a total of four meetings.[20] In Hanoi, this consisted of one meeting between nine farmers who had been expropriated[21] from their land to build the Ciputra International City in Phu Thuong ward, as well as a meeting with eight local officials of the Nhat Tan ward (both in Tay Ho).[22] In Montreal, this was a workshop with 15 seniors at a weekly lunch gathering, where we led them in a discussion about the effects of gentrification on their lives, as well as a meeting with eight staff members of the NDG community council.

Photography

Throughout the study I took 5,750 photos. This form of media can have an important role in the research process and data analysis. Photos can help with uncovering details that are only noticed after the fact, and they offer a snapshot of how different gentrification actors and impacts play out over time. I considered photography as a means to a) engage collaboratively with participants (e.g. sharing photographs and asking for their insight on its meaning), b) extract meaning from a photograph that may not have been noticed during the research itself, and c) express my own subjective feelings and creative interpretation of what I was experiencing, and d) elicit feelings in the viewer of the photograph and to connect them with the life experiences of participants and the sensory experience of field research (Schwartz, 1989; Banks 1995; Bailey and McAfee, 2003; Holm, 2014). In this way, photography had a multivalent purpose that combined documentary evidence, participation, creative interpretation, and meaning-making, and storytelling. Photographs are not claimed to be neutral or objective but rather are part of a process of construction and co-construction between myself, the participants of this study, and the reader (Rose, 2014b).

[20] Here I use a more broad term 'meeting' because I didn't use pre-defined focus group methodology, in each case these gatherings were semi-structured and informally organised.
[21] Expropriation means here that they were compensated with a nominal fee, which they had little choice but to accept.
[22] The 9 farmers were contacted following a dérive in the area, where Van and I approached a peach tree farmer on her field. After some conversation, offered to help us in our research and offered to invite her friends for a discussion about changes in the area. The 9 local officials of Nhat Tan ward were invited through the qualitative methods workshop, facilitated by researchers at the National University of Civil Engineering.

There were several concrete ways that photography was used. Photography could document neighbourhood physical and aesthetic changes, albeit from my own subjective perspective as the researcher and photographer. It was also a part of the participatory observation process: printed portrait shots were often used as gifts to thank interviewees for their time, which helped establish a stronger relationship of trust. This related to my ethical approach of prioritising relationships of trust with participants.[23] As already mentioned, the students at the workshop in Hanoi were asked to take pictures and then present them to the group. This is a form of photo-voice, where participants are given (in this case they used their smartphones) a camera and are asked to take photos, and then narrate why they took the photo and what makes it important (Wang and Burris, 1997; Strack *et al.*, 2004). Asking students to take pictures of the neighbourhood they were surveying helped me to see things that I might not have noticed myself, and so proved useful in diversifying interpretations of the same data. Further, photographs were presented at the public events in Hanoi and Montreal, and attendees were encouraged to respond to the photos with their own stories of urban change, and share what the photos made them think about. These techniques represent a form of 'collaborative visual research', where the researcher and participants work together to elucidate the meaning of photography (Norman, 1991; Banks, 1995). Finally, in a method similar to grounded theory, I sorted through the 5750 photos using Adobe Bridge and coded them according to recurring themes. In several cases, this process helped me come up with new themes and realise something I hadn't noticed before.[24] These photos were then sorted into different folders, which were used throughout the following chapters to illustrate observations. In this way, photography helped capture the role of material life and foodways in gentrification, drawing attention to identify the multiple and conflicting values at play during gentrification.

[23] It was not possible to obtain vocal consent from everyone who was photographed, because research was often in public spaces. When possible, research participants were asked if they wanted to be photographed, and vocal assent indicated consent. Photos of people in public places who were not participants of the research, and who would not be affected personally by the photography in any way, did sometimes include identifying features such as faces. Due to the political nature of our research project, and especially the extent of criminalisation of anti-government activity in Vietnam, no photographs of research participants were disseminated publicly in which people's faces or voices were identifiable, and only one is included here because the participant explicitly asked us to, and photos were also kept on an encrypted and password-protected drive (see section on research ethics above).

[24] For example, in Hanoi, I realised only after looking at my photos and categorising them that sidewalk container gardens were common in both rich and poor neighbourhoods. In the rich neighbourhoods, these were constructed more permanently, while in poor neighbourhoods, these were more mobile, so that residents could quickly move them when police came.

The visual aspect of the photography was also extremely helpful here, as it viscerally showed how gentrification relates to material life and helps to connect personally to people's lived reality—emblematic of how presenting data in a form of collage can bring together daily life and broader political structures. In particular, photography calls attention to the qualitative impacts of gentrification in a way that other data may not as well, as it evokes compassion and helps to illustrate stories that may otherwise remain hidden. Thus, its symbolic effect can help with telling stories about patterns of change and everyday activities within the neighbourhood, as well as dissemination of the results to wider audiences.

Events

Part of the research was also to attend, and participate in, events (see Table 8 below) such as day trips to certain sites, guided walks, protests, presentations to local groups and media, lectures, and film screenings. Participating in these events gave me peripheral insights into the many aspects of gentrification and urban change, both from the top-down and bottom-up. They also added to the process of iterative analysis, as presenting my research in multiple spaces was itself a way to process my findings and test my conclusions on different groups, with varying degrees of expertise, power, and knowledge.

Hanoi	Montreal
2 guided walks with residents (Linh Dam, Tay Ho)	3 guided walks with residents (Saint-Henri, NDG, Little Burgundy)
3 presentations (1 to Vietnamese sociology researchers, 2 to NGO staff)	1 public radio interview
Attendance of film screening and discussion	1 protest
Attendance of 3 public lectures on local urban development issues	1 neighbourhood party
7 day visits (EcoPark, Times City, Royal City, Ciputra, Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính, Mulberry Lane, VinHomes Riverside gated community)	1 public community conference
Subtotal: 16	Subtotal: 7

Table 8 Kinds of events in each case study site

Second, in both cities, we hosted a public event in order to present the research to local residents. These events encouraged feedback from locals about the findings of the study, but also became ways to inform local actors such as politicians and activists

about the findings of our research.[25] I was also invited for a workshop at a community garden in Barcelona, where I got the chance to share my photos and stories from my research, ending with an open discussion about the role of community gardens and food in gentrification. Organising these events gave me new and inspiring insight into my own data by giving me the chance to analyse and present findings, and hearing from locals how they themselves interpret findings. I saw these events as part of a peripheral research method, where data analysis was approached through juxtaposition and collage, and where data was engaged with on many levels.

Data analysis

Throughout the research, I kept a journal where I logged every 'event' (interview, meeting, excursion), wrote reflections, and kept track of different 'leads' that could inform the research. I would also have conversations about the interviews with my research collaborators, Van and Lucie, which were recorded and during which I would take notes. Data analysis was therefore quite open-ended, dynamic and iterative, with the goal of trying to record and analyse simultaneously throughout the project.

Beyond recording and analysing data in this open-ended way, I also processed my data in several, more structured ways. I transcribed all useful data from the journal and recorded interviews into a single document for each case study. I marked recurring themes that corresponded to my research questions in this document and highlighted my on-the-spot observations, as well as remarks from Van and Lucie. I then created a spreadsheet of all interviews and events. This process of cataloguing and transcription, which took roughly two years following my field research, was essential for thinking through my findings and identifying recurring themes. Journaling everything, transcribing it, using the journal as a reference point for analysis, also fit well with the open-ended nature of the research process. In a sense

[25] In Hanoi, the public event drew about 80-100 people and consisted of a panel discussion between several well-known intellectuals, including a presentation of our findings. It was in Vietnamese and English, with interpretation available. It also included an exhibition, featuring photography and life stories. In Montreal, the public event was much smaller and intimate. It drew about 20 people, and involved a presentation of our research findings and a photo exhibition. Attendees were encouraged to write their own experiences on photos, discussing what they thought, and we facilitated an open discussion on the research findings. Both public events were recorded with audio and video equipment.

there were multiple 'layers' of theoretical analysis throughout the project, constantly connecting live observations with theory and more structured thought.[26]

Because of the iterative nature of my data analysis and data collection, analysis often also re-oriented the kinds of data collection we did and who we would interview. For example, in Hanoi, we noticed that the link between informal street vending and land dispossession was a theme, we decided we would seek to interview more farmers and former farmers. The fact that I first conducted research in Hanoi and then in Montreal allowed my findings from Hanoi to inform my data collection and analysis in Montreal: for example, on learning the outsize effect that taking up public space had in Hanoi on people's responses to gentrification, I also paid attention to how people were using public space in Montreal—which led me to ask questions that I may not have asked, defamiliarising myself from a context I was more familiar with. The combination of relying on a basic orientation to structure my analysis, being open to new themes emerging, defamiliarising myself through comparative work, and then allowing each to inform my data collection helped me identify gaps in what I knew during the research process but also allowed new information to change my understanding of each case study, as well as the theoretical concepts I was using.

Validity, reliability, and limitations

The study's findings had several limitations that related specifically to inter-personal and situational relationships. Much of the data relied on interviews and my own observations, values, and knowledge. Especially in Vietnam, it is likely that things were often left unsaid, were self-censored, or that participants did not feel comfortable explaining their situation. Translation and interpretation between Vietnamese, French, and English may have also limited understanding. In many cases, people's spoken values reflected the party line. In this way, while the involvement of multiple people in the project itself was not a problem and may have added more insight, it is certain that some things were lost in translation and that there were dynamics between the principal investigator and the research collaborators that may have structured and shaped the research process (Turner, 2010). The findings were also structured by my own background and appearance: appearing as a white

[26] Initially, I had intended to code all my data, using the software Dedoose. Yet, when coding data for Hanoi, reaching 73 individual codes, I found that coding process did not add to my analysis significantly and so I did not continue it with the Montreal data.

foreigner determined the relationships between participants in unique ways in both Montréal and Hanoi. And of course my own past experiences, personal privileges, and well-off class position influenced my interactions and ultimately my observations. Research in both Montréal and Hanoi was defined by the fact that the researcher is male and many of the interviewees were women—adding another layer of power relationships between the researcher and participants, which then also determined the findings.

These issues were addressed in several ways. The field research in Hanoi involved on-site observation, where we visited several interviewees' homes and became acquainted with them. This allowed us to observe some of the values that participants acted on, while what they said might not have reflected those values—and in turn helped to build trust with the participants. As much as possible, I also attempted to test my own assumptions by checking with my research collaborators on a regular basis. Hosting public events and presenting the research in different venues in each case study location also helped test assumptions with local audiences and add to my understanding of the situation. Reading existing literature contributed to this as well; in particular, my engagement with the extensive and vibrant world of contemporary Vietnamese literature and art also helped me to better understand the Vietnamese history and context. Further, the research process—in particular the 'peripheral perspective' approach—involved iterative revaluation and refinement of the findings, self-reflexivity of the researcher, and regular check-ins with research collaborators on the progress of the project and their perspectives of our findings.

Second, there are limitations related to the timing and breadth of the research project. Research in Hanoi took place in the winter, and in Montreal in the summer. This affected the findings because these are often the most active parts of the year, when people are most engaged and on the street. Because research took place during a six-month time period in each location, research offers a snapshot and does not show developments over time—as such historical narratives may help ameliorate this, but these also are subjective. To address this, care was taken to develop a broader timeline through reading of primary and secondary literature, which were then cross-checked with individual narratives. When possible, reliability of these accounts were verified by other non-oral sources.

Conclusion

Employing a 'peripheral perspective', I sought to understand how gentrification affects people in the day-to-day. Montreal and Hanoi were good candidates to approach gentrification in this way. Montreal is a 'classic' case of gentrification where, nevertheless, the role of foodways and material life has not been studied at length. In Hanoi, gentrification is much less studied but it is also vastly different to the Montreal case. That difference allows for a kind of 'defamiliarisation', and, through a corporeal method of study, I could explore how people's daily life viscerally engaged with hegemonic structures and regimes of value.

Data collection involved discourse analysis of grey literature, dérives, interviews, on-site observation, questionnaires, meetings, photography, and public events. Interviews were both spontaneous and planned. Analysis was iterative throughout the research, involving the relationship with research collaborators, photography, and public events. Analysis was also conducted after the research, through transcription of interviews and my field diaries. These methods were selected to be open enough to be able to engage with people's material life, while also enabling an understanding of structural, hegemonic power structures. In addition, analysis was also done through collaboration and opening up my findings to others; this ensured robustness of interpretation of the data, as well as allowing for openness to new interpretations. This approach was fine-grained enough for noticing material life, and broad enough to place that material life in the context of gentrification and other structural dynamics, and comparing findings across contexts. Approaching both case studies in this way allowed for triangulation, allowing for exploring new ground and enabling generalisation. In the next chapter, I describe both case studies at length, explaining why comparing these very different cities is productive for research on gentrification.

Chapter 4

‘Classic’ gentrification in Montreal versus Hanoi’s ‘storm’: presenting two case studies

The thin winding alleys of Bằng A, a neighbourhood in the Hoang Mai district of southern Hanoi, have a distinct village-like feeling. But if you can catch a glimpse past the squeezed four-story houses leaning over you, you will notice the thick apartment blocks looming behind them. In the 1990s, the area surrounding Bằng A was selected as the first state-led New Urban Area of Linh Dam (Labbé, 2015). Since then, residents have had much of their farmland expropriated, and seen the transformation of the countryside into a lively urban district with middle class newcomers whose expectations include eating out, going to the gym, commuting easily to the city, and having good access to services like parks and private school for their children. But, most of the original residents are still there, and they still call themselves villagers. While very few have been displaced from their homes it is clear that villagers have experienced a rapid transformation of their way of life and now live side-by-side with Vietnam’s growing, cosmopolitan middle class.

On the other side of the world, Saint-Henri, Montreal, has seen a rebranding of the area from a working-class stronghold to a gentrified foodie heaven. Yet, as with Bằng A, the story isn't one of wholesale direct displacement. Gentrification appears far more ambiguous. Though many original residents have since been forced to move (Twigge-Molecey, 2013), there are many who can stay: the Sud-Ouest Borough, which Saint-Henri is part of, has the highest proportion of social housing in Montreal (Centraide, 2019a), and strong provincial tenants’ rights laws mean that people do have some degree of protection from being displaced.

In this chapter, I present the case studies of Montreal and Hanoi. While Montreal is in many ways a ‘classic’ case of gentrification, Hanoi, with its ‘storm’ of urban development (Fanchette, 2008), offers a different experience of how gentrification plays out in a rapidly changing post-communist city. I highlight the political economic contexts as well as the development of gentrification in each area. I

conclude by highlighting the differences between the two case studies, and the gaps in existing research for both. In Montreal, relatively strong tenants' rights laws and the presence of social housing—especially in my case study neighbourhoods of Saint-Henri and NDG—suggests that studying how people's daily lives are affected through a foodways approach can add to literature on 'classic' cases of gentrification by looking beyond direct displacement to other characteristics of neighbourhood change produced by gentrification, and the impact on and responses by residents who manage to stay put. In Hanoi, a foodways approach is again revealing, as direct displacement from housing is not so prominent; rather, changes in people's livelihoods away from agriculture mean that there are many ways people's foodways are affected. As well, Vietnam's extensive informal sector highlights the need to study how gentrification affects people's survival strategies outside of the formal economy, especially so in regard to material life and food. In both cities, studying changes in foodways can give better insight into the way by which gentrification affects low-income people's daily life. Moreover, their stark contrasts, but simultaneous similarities, offer rich opportunities for comparison.

Photo 2 Contrasts in Linh Dam.

(Top) At the very edge of Bằng A. (Bottom) Inside the new urban area of Linh Dam, less than 1 km away.

Photo 3 Contrasts in Saint-Henri.

(Top left) A new condo and townhouses side-by-side in Saint-Henri, Montreal. (Top right) Social housing in Saint-Henri, with a new mega-hospital in the background. (Bottom left) Brunch places next to older diners on Rue Notre-Dame. (Bottom right) The Atwater Market, looking over the renovated Lachine Canal lined with condos.

‘Classic’ gentrification in Montreal

Over the last half-century, Montreal’s gentrification has followed patterns corresponding to a ‘classic’ kind of gentrification—from the arrival of a professional class into inner-city working-class neighbourhoods in the 1970s to more recent state-led and green gentrification as Montreal has sought to align itself with ‘global city’ aspirations. Indeed, from early research on gentrification to research today on ‘global cities’, the city is considered by gentrification scholars to be a paradigmatic case of gentrification’s development (Rose, 1984; Ley, 1986; Lees *et al.*, 2008). Here I contextualise Montreal's gentrification alongside political and economic contexts, as well as recent history of urban social movements.

Wider political and economic context

Canada is a liberal capitalist settler state, with a parliamentary democracy system. Starting in the 1950s, following the path of other Western nations and pushed by its labour movements, Canada developed a partial welfare system, which included systems of child support, unemployment support, and access to schooling and healthcare (Moscovitch, 2006). However, the collapse of the mining and lumber industry in the late 1970s, compounded by the shockwaves surrounding the 1973 oil crisis, led to the decline of labour movements around Canada and, by the 1980s, successive cutbacks to welfare programs, decentralisation of federal government to the provincial level, and increasing liberalisation of its domestic market through several Free Trade Agreements (Lightman and Riches, 2000). This also involved, like other early industrialised nations at the time, a shift from agricultural and industrial labour towards the service industry, as well as, more unique to the Canadian context, the development of the Tar Sands as a major export commodity (Stanford, 2008).

In Quebec, the 1960s were a period of immense social conflict, now referred to as the Quiet Revolution. During this period, Quebec society largely rejected both the dominance of the Catholic church as well as Anglophone cultural and economic hegemony over the province and pushed for a series of changes that helped to give further autonomy, allowing the province to also set up a robust and unique welfare system, as well as initiating a set of reforms that would reinforce French as Quebec’s main language (Dickinson and Young, 2008; Lacoursière and Philpot, 2009).

Montreal served as Canada's economic capital for many decades—until a decline in growth and capital flight in the late 1970s and throughout the 1990s, with Toronto eventually taking on this mantle (Cooper, 1969; Higgins, 1986; Annick *et al.*, 2001; Kresl, 2002; Hamel and Jouve, 2008). Settled on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) territory, the island was considered a meeting point for many Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois confederacy) and Algonquin Anishinaabe. Because of its being Canada's first and most important industrial hub, with access to the Saint Lawrence seaway, railroad interchanges, oil refineries, and textile and wood and paper manufacturing, Montreal has a long and extensive working-class history (Copp, 1974; Lewis, 2001). Beginning in the 1900s, working-class communities resided closer to the low-lying areas of the city, by the docks and Lachine Canal, while elites resided in more elevated neighbourhoods like Westmount and Outremont, and, as they were further urbanised, Hampstead, the Town of Mount Royal, and parts of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Montreal was considered a cosmopolitan, global city, with the World Expo in 1967 and the 1976 summer Olympics leading to large infrastructural developments such as the expansive metro system, the Turcot Interchange and Decarie Expressway—which still feature predominantly in Montreal's landscape and cultural imagination (Paul, 2004). From the 1950s to the 1970s, Montreal's rapid urban development was driven by foreign capital and investment, particularly from European speculators (Aubin, 1977). This boom eventually collapsed following the advance of the Quebec separatist movement, which, together with a wider economic crisis in Canada and de-industrialisation, led to capital flight from the city in the 1980s and 1990s (Germain and Rose, 2000).

From roll-back to roll-over neoliberalism

In the last few decades, Montreal has experienced what has been called 'roll-back' and 'roll-over' neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore, 2002), as well as 'cosmopolitan' rebranding through 'world-city' and 'creative cities' models (Paul, 2004; Rantisi and Leslie, 2006; Moser *et al.* 2019). 'Roll-back' neoliberalism is a process in which 'municipalities [in early industrialised countries] were increasingly constrained to introduce various kinds of cost-cutting measures' (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 373). 'Roll-over' neoliberalism meant a new mode of governance

which in part sought to shift the responsibility of social aid to communities themselves.

Thus, in the 1990s, along with a series of economic downturns throughout Canada and in Montreal in particular, the Quebec government initiated a series of welfare reforms and cutbacks, while developing what came to be called the *économie sociale*, or social economy (Favreau & Saucier, 1996; D'Amours, 2002). The government developed a system of community aid, administered by the public-private charity organisation Centraide, which in large part was meant to compliment, and in some areas diminish the need for, robust welfare institutions (Shragge, 2003). Civil society organisations in every neighbourhood had to begin applying for grants and compete with each other to obtain limited funding available for each neighbourhood. The professionalisation of civil society, previously rather militant and grounded in working-class organising, led to a shift from protest and consciousness-raising to service provision, and de-politicisation of community efforts (D'Amours, 2002; Shragge, 2003).

Another way that neoliberalism affected the Canadian political economy is through the changing food system. Following the advent of globalisation in the 1970s, Canada started to see increased imports and exports and closing of independent grocery stores, and subsequent increase in chain food retailers (Qualman and Wiebe, 2002). While the Canadian agricultural system features strong support for farmers, involving agricultural cooperatives and farmers' unions, the signing of the Canada-America Free Trade Agreement in 1988 and the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1989 drastically changed the industry, through deregulation and international competition, leading farmers to cut labour costs, affecting small farmers significantly, and leading to an increase in rural-urban migration. Around the country, food provision was increasingly the purview of an oligopoly of large retailers (Qualman and Wiebe, 2002).

Paired with cutbacks to welfare, this centralisation of the food industry and its high levels of food waste also led to the subsequent growth of food banks as a privatised, second-tier welfare system (Riches, 1986; Poppendieck, 1999; Vansintjan, 2015). Food banks are an essential feature of the foodscape of poverty-stricken communities in Canada as they provide a resource of last resort for many people. It was during this period, as well, that a large network of food banks and emergency

food aid emerged and became institutionalised in Montreal, headed by Moisson Montreal, the largest emergency food aid supplier in Canada, which distributes food to food banks in every neighbourhood (Vansintjan, 2015).

In Montreal, the last half-century saw progressive closure of small delis, butchers, and bakeries, making way for the ubiquity of *dépanneurs*, small corner stores stocking mostly packaged, long shelf life products, and, on the other hand, chain supermarkets.[27] Yet, unlike other North American and Canadian cities and rural areas, Montreal has a relatively low prevalence of food deserts, largely due to the high number of small grocery stores stocking fresh produce, often cheaper than the chain store alternatives, that have persisted and continue to thrive despite these changes (Apparicio *et al.,* 2007).

At its best, the social economy framework allowed for the institutionalisation of a decentralised social support network. But it also helped to shift the role of social aid from the government to communities themselves (D'Amours, 2002). As one author has argued, the social economy model was part and parcel of the gradual cutting back of government services and facilitated the dominance of neoliberal governance ideology (Shragge, 2003). Though organisations get funding and support, the mechanisms of competition ensure that they must limit their outward-facing activity to largely apolitical initiatives that are not seen as threatening to local officials, who often have the power to recommend cutting funding and support to more political organisations (Ibid.).

Parallel to this development, sociologists have noted the slow closure of food and social spaces in working class areas around North America—including diners and bars (Putnam, 2000). The closure of the 'great good place' such as churches, cafes, and clubs (Oldenburg, 1991) has contributed to what is being called an epidemic of loneliness, especially amongst the elderly (Killeen, 1998; Cacioppo and Cacioppo, 2018)—also noted by community groups in Montreal (Urtnowski, 2016). The rise of mega-stores, online shopping, and globalisation has, according to some, contributed to the slow collapse of once-vibrant commercial streets in Euro-American countries (Wrigley and Dolega, 2011; Zukin *et al.*, 2015; Hubbard, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2016), further contributing to a transformation of people's foodways towards the use of

[27] This was confirmed in my interviews of residents, many of whom were older than 60, and noted that the neighbourhood used to have far more small family-run businesses to buy food.

mega-stores and decreasing reliance on small grocers. Again, this has been connected to gentrification as well, as retail gentrification has led to the slow closure of inner-city working class-oriented food spaces, further leading to isolation amongst poor urban residents (Zukin *et al.*, 2015; Hubbard, 2017). So, while Montreal saw the professionalisation of its community sector and a turn to charity food provision, this also came together with the closing of community spaces and a rise in loneliness, especially amongst the elderly.

Another aspect of 'roll-over' neoliberalism was the effort to rebrand Montreal as a global city ready for capital investment (Paul, 2004), setting the stage for a development boom that is continuing today. Montreal had begun a 're-branding' strategy accelerating throughout the 1990s and 2000s (*Ibid.*). It was through this strategy that the importance of the real estate sector was re-established after the economic collapse of the 1980s. In the 1990s, a newly powerful francophone business class sought to 're-internationalise' Montreal (where 're' refers to the golden decade of the 1960s, considered to be Montreal's heyday of cosmopolitanism) (Germain and Rose, 2000; Paul, 2004: 584). The incorporation of Montreal International in 1996, a public-private company led by executives from communications and airline companies and former politicians seeking to represent Montreal's commercial interests both locally and globally, meant that elites began to shift from being 'confined to a relatively insulated and restricted Quebec market' towards being able to 'sell, invest, produce, and consume in the most advanced sectors at the macroregional and global scales' (Paul, 2004: 585). Montreal's politicians were seeking to re-orient the city towards an image of a globally oriented, culturally hip, and fashionable city open for capital investment and, eventually, extensive investment in large development projects (Ibid.; McKim, 2012).

Housing context and tenant rights in Montreal

Despite the resurgence of real estate capital's importance in Montreal's political landscape, the city continues to have robust and well-developed systems of tenants' rights and housing support, almost unmatched in the rest of Canada or its southern neighbour (Choko and Harris, 1990). A provincial *régie de logement* (housing board) hears complaints and resolves disputes between tenants and landlords. Rent increases are only legally allowed when the property is renovated significantly or property taxes

increase. Evictions are only possible when the owner or a family member wants to move in or when the building receives a permit to be completely renovated; in this case, tenants must receive reimbursement for moving costs, which can add up to several months' worth of rent. Montreal tenants effectively have full rent control, but there are some loopholes. For example, 'renovictions' are common, where owners use the excuse of a significant renovation to raise the rent—forcing the tenant to move. Otherwise, landlords force out the tenant under the pretence that they or a family member are moving in. Further, it is the responsibility of the tenant to contest the rent increase, leading to only a very small number of cases of rent increase being heard by the housing board.

Another boon for low-income Montrealers is that non-market housing is a significant proportion of all housing stock. Nine per cent of Montreal households live in non-profit housing (e.g. social housing, subsidised housing, or cooperative housing), compared to 36% of households who are owners and 64% who are renters[28] (Statistics Canada, 2017c). However, comparatively little new non-market housing has been built since the late 1990s when federal funding programs were discontinued. In addition, organisations like Centraide, and by extension the state, also financially support neighbourhood-based tenant advocacy groups, called *comités de logement* (housing committees). As an example, POPIR, a relatively militant member-based tenant advocacy organisation in Saint-Henri, has existed since 1969 and has received funds from Centraide and the city throughout much of its existence. Then again, starting in the mid-2010s, landlords were considered to have gained more power vis-a-vis renters as vacancy rates have dropped, with three-bedroom apartments in certain neighbourhoods nearing 0.8-0.0% vacancy (Curtis, 2019; Hurteau, 2019). Real estate prices in Montreal have gone up an average of 13.7% in three years, compared to 5.9% from 2013-2016 (Luft and Rowe, 2019). So, even as Montreal does support tenants relatively well, the real estate market is increasingly facing intense pressure and tenants are its feeling the effects.

[28] Note that there is some overlap in these numbers, as households who live in cooperative housing are considered renters by Statistics Canada.

The phases of gentrification in Montreal

Early research on Montreal's gentrification supported the theory, associated with the 'demand-side' explanation for gentrification (see Chapter 2) that the shift toward a post-industrial society, information technologies and highly specialised labour became key sources of profit in the early 1980s, which led to the growth of the 'knowledge sector', and that this had, in turn, shaped cities to become more oriented toward the production of culture. This process was made famous by Richard Florida as 'the rise of the creative class', where he argued that in post-industrial contexts, urban economic growth was driven by creativity and tolerance—and Montreal was one of his primary examples (Florida, 2002). This then brought in the capital to transform former inner-city industrial zones and working-class areas for the benefit of this new class (Ley, 1986; 1994; 1996; 2003). Further, it was shown that, in Montreal, gentrification largely occurred in areas that surround wealthier neighbourhoods like Westmount and Outremont, as well as in historic or central areas like Old Montreal, or ones with many amenities like parks, universities, hospitals, galleries, and museums such as downtown, the Gay Village, and Griffintown (Ley 1986; 1994). Scholars argued that the progressive attitudes and agency of gentrifiers could not be distinguished from the process itself, as it was these values that led them to disdain suburban life and desire living in more 'diverse' neighbourhoods where they could meet 'the other' (Caulfield, 1989). Following this early research describing some of the demand-side drivers of gentrification, other researchers such as Damaris Rose used the Montreal case study to show the role of 'marginal gentrifiers' (gentrifiers of moderate income) in gentrification (1984; 1996; 2014a; see Chapter 2).

Gentrification in Montreal also followed classic 'phases' as identified by Hackworth and Smith (2001). The 1960s saw significant state-led gentrification through the razing of the downtown core and development of Montreal's downtown office and retail district (Aubin, 1977). A 'second wave' began in the 1970s when neighbourhoods like the Plateau and Old Montreal, which previously saw disinvestment and were adjacent to high-end neighbourhoods, became gentrified by young urban professionals as part of a 'sporadic' and 'anchoring' process, encouraged by rezoning and small state programs (Ley, 1986; 1994; 1996; 2003; Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003; Walks and Maaranen 2008a; 2008b). A third wave saw a pause in the process during the economic crisis of the late 1980s and early 1990s, followed by

the entrenchment of gentrification in already-gentrified areas, influx of new international capital, state-led imagineering projects such as the development of the Quartier des Spectacles in the Quartier Latin near downtown, and the overflow of the process in previously marginal neighbourhoods (Paul, 2004; Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003; Walks and Maaranen 2008b). During this phase, neighbourhoods like Griffintown, Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG), Hochelaga, the Quartier Latin and Gay Village, and the Mile End were identified as 'gentrification frontiers' (Walks and Maraanen, 2008b)—not yet fully gentrified but clearly facing future transformations. At this point, it was found that changes in the amount of people with higher incomes are the main indicator of the progress of gentrification, but factors such as social status (e.g. people with cultural capital like artists or students, but little economic capital), numbers of people working in the arts, changes in housing stock and levels of rent versus home ownership, increasing housing value, and new-build construction were also significant variables (Ibid). This 'third wave' prepared the ground for a 'fourth wave' of gentrification, and perhaps even a 'fifth wave'.

Most recently, this fourth wave of gentrification is marked by even more intense state-led 'imagineering'—'a political as well as economic project in which particular actors, classes and coalitions pursue their own visions of global status and connectivity'—and new-build development, such as the total transformation of Griffintown into an IT and condo district (Paul, 2004: 573; McKim, 2012). The Lachine Canal, bordering Saint-Henri, Little Burgundy, Verdun, and Pointe Sainte-Charles also saw intense development through public-private partnerships. Saint-Henri in particular became a flashpoint in the popular struggle against gentrification, becoming featured in international news after activists targeted new businesses on its main commercial street, rue Notre-Dame (Kassam, 2016). In Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, as well, Monkland street was slowly transformed and upgraded to a high-end shopping street, and the surrounding area became called 'Monkland Village'—a development which also did not escape the pages of *The Guardian* (Perry, 2016). This 'fourth wave' of gentrification has come along with rising inequality and forms of segregation across Montreal's urban fabric (Rose and Twigge-Molecey, 2013). While second-wave gentrification was led by a newly emerging urban professional class—connected to the knowledge and IT industries—the new residents now also included

new homeowners looking to downscale from their suburban homes and live more urban lifestyles, and international investors (*Ibid.*).

Today, we may be seeing a 'fifth wave' which, quoting Manuel B. Aalbers, is 'characterised by the emergence of corporate landlords, highly leveraged housing, platform capitalism (e.g. Airbnb), transnational wealth elites using cities as a 'safe deposit box', and a further 'naturalisation' of state-sponsored gentrification' (Aalbers, 2019: 1). In Montreal, this involves closer collaboration between developers and the municipal government, more refined branding strategies, and facilitation of real estate as an investment strategy. Gentrification is spilling over into new neighbourhoods previously not flagged as being 'gentrification frontiers', such as Verdun, a largely working-class neighbourhood which saw the highest property increase in 2019 (Luft and Rowe, 2019) and Park-Extension, the poorest and most ethnically diverse neighbourhood in Montreal (Halais, 2019).

This current wave of gentrification also involves new forms of state-led development, with state subsidies grants for the rapidly growing tech industry, and the development of huge tracts of previously public and industrial land by developer conglomerations. Researchers have noted the advance of development projects disguised as 'greening', and large-scale condo development in areas previously dominated by warehouses and factories, predominantly in the Sud-Ouest area (Poitras, 2009; Belanger, 2010; 2012; Rose, 2010). Research has investigated the relationship between mega-project construction, greening, and gentrification processes, as well as the role of everyday life in residents' experiences of gentrification—such as use of public parks, relationships with neighbours, and access to different services in the neighbourhood (Twigge-Molecey, 2009; 2013). The city is seeing massive investment in infrastructure, from upgrading of the Turcot Interchange to the construction of the new $4.4-billion Champlain bridge, and the building of two mega-hospitals each costing several billion to develop. These public-private projects, funded by the state but implemented through construction contracts awarded to private Quebec-based but internationally operating engineering firms, often prepare the way for more gentrification through the sanctioning of rezoning and smaller beautification projects in the surrounding areas, leading to increased property value (see Chapter 1). This has included a new university campus, an AI hub, the development of formerly industrial sites to high-end housing complexes, and a new

rapid urban transit system (Halais, 2019; Guay *et al.,* 2020; Lindeman, 2018; Barlow, 2019; Corriveau, 2019). What is emerging today is a scaled-up strategy of collaboration between political parties, investors, and developers to upgrade whole areas. Concern by civil society and housing activists is mounting, just as activists are calling for serious attention to the lack of affordable housing and an unprecedentedly low housing vacancy rate (Curtis, 2019; Hurteau, 2019).

Race is also an important, though under-studied, aspect of gentrification in Montreal. Neighbourhoods like Pointe Sainte-Charles, the Plateau, Griffintown, and Saint-Henri—earlier targets of gentrification—were predominantly inhabited by European working class—comprised of Irish, French-Canadians, Portuguese, Jewish, Italian, Greek, and Eastern European residents. This is with the exception of Little Burgundy, a neighbourhood lying in between Griffintown (Irish) and Saint-Henri (French-Canadian), which is historically African-Canadian, and is today also dominated by Caribbean, South Asian, and Middle Eastern communities (High, 2019; Centraide, 2019a). With a significant amount of cooperative and public housing, Little Burgundy is still largely populated by ethnically-diverse and working-class residents, however, commercial gentrification has reduced working class-oriented stores and spaces (Twigge-Molecey, 2013; Bélanger, Forthcoming). More recently, however, as in Chinatown, Park-Extension, and NDG, gentrification is progressing in neighbourhoods that are less dominated by European working class but which are more ethnically diverse (Perry, 2016; Halais, 2019; Luft and Rowe, 2019; Spector, 2018). This has led to gentrification taking on more racialised dynamics though there remains relatively little research on this development. One aspect that likely will have an increasing impact is that state-based social welfare institutions traditionally rooted in white working-class neighbourhoods are less developed in neighbourhoods dominated by non-white communities (Mills, 2010; Séguin *et al.*, 2012). Immigrant and non-white communities often develop their own social welfare structures. However, research exploring these questions is lacking.

It is also important to note that, despite the media's focus on food as an aspect of gentrification in Montreal, there is little academic research exploring this issue in Montreal. Anti-gentrification protests and activist actions in Saint-Henri have focused on food spaces, and the borough's policy to regulate the number of new restaurants opening on Rue Notre-Dame has received media attention (Kassam, 2016; Hays,

2016; Shingler, 2016). In NDG, restaurants, supermarkets, and community food groups have had to close their doors or move—also reported extensively by the media (Lindeman, 2014; Perry, 2016; Shields, 2016). Though there is some research on how gentrification affects food spaces of the urban poor in Global North cities (Chapter 2), this research direction is still nascent. This gap in our understanding offers an opportunity to study the issue of how classic gentrification affects people's foodways in Montreal.

Summary

Gentrification in Montreal, as with many cities around the world, has become a ubiquitous and generalised strategy of urban development, branding, and investment. This has come hand-in-hand with other strategies of 'greening' and 'global imagineering', as well as increasing inequality and social stratification. Nevertheless, strong institutions protecting tenants and some amount of social housing stock ensure that there are some basic protections in place to curtail wide-scale displacement as is often seen in other North American cities. Further, a vibrant tradition of working class organising and bottom-up social institutions, as well as a well-developed civil society network, offers unique insight into a city with both relatively high levels of support for tenants and strong institutions of community-based support. The relative prominence of social housing and a well-developed civil society means that the role of material life—that is, the everyday relationships, modes of social reproduction, and material needs of residents—in resisting and shaping gentrification can be especially interesting to investigate, in part because many residents are not facing direct displacement (see Chapter 1) but are rather seeing the transformation of their neighbourhood as they continue to live there. That there is already literature on gentrification's impacts on material life in Montreal, such as work by Rose (1984; 1994; 2014a), Twigge-Molecey (2013), and others, offers the opportunity to improve on an already well-developed picture of both its qualitative effects and drivers, and to focus on previously 'marginal' and 'frontier' neighbourhoods that have become more clearly gentrified. Though the interaction of food and gentrification is a growing field of study (Chapter 1), there is little peer-reviewed research in Montreal on the subject. This indicates that there is potential in exploring the role of foodways in a case of 'classic' gentrification.

Description of neighbourhoods: Saint-Henri and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

In the above sections, I outlined Montreal's recent history and explained how gentrification emerged as a 'classic' case of the process, closely following patterns noted by other North American researchers. Throughout these sections, I wove in details about my two case study neighbourhoods—Saint-Henri and NDG—sign-posting why they are relevant neighbourhoods for my research. In the following, I describe the two case study locations, the neighbourhoods of Saint-Henri and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG). Saint-Henri especially has followed a classic process, transforming from a working-class post-industrial neighbourhood to one marked by new condo developments and large greening projects, becoming a fine dining destination within the span of a decade. NDG has also seen gentrification but in a much more complex way, with commercial gentrification being the most prominent spatial transformation, while much of the borough has long exhibited stark inequality and with residential gentrification much less generalised than in Saint-Henri. Both neighbourhoods follow the general trend of gentrification in Montreal, beginning as 'frontiers' adjacent to either high-end neighbourhoods (as in NDG and Westmount) or already-gentrified areas (as with Saint-Henri and Griffintown), and then seeing displacement combined with different state-led strategies, such as renovation of infrastructure, mega-projects, and new-build development. Their proximity also means that they may see some of the same spill-over effects of new developments: both border the new mega-hospital construction, renovation of the Turcot Interchange, and the greening of the Lachine Canal.

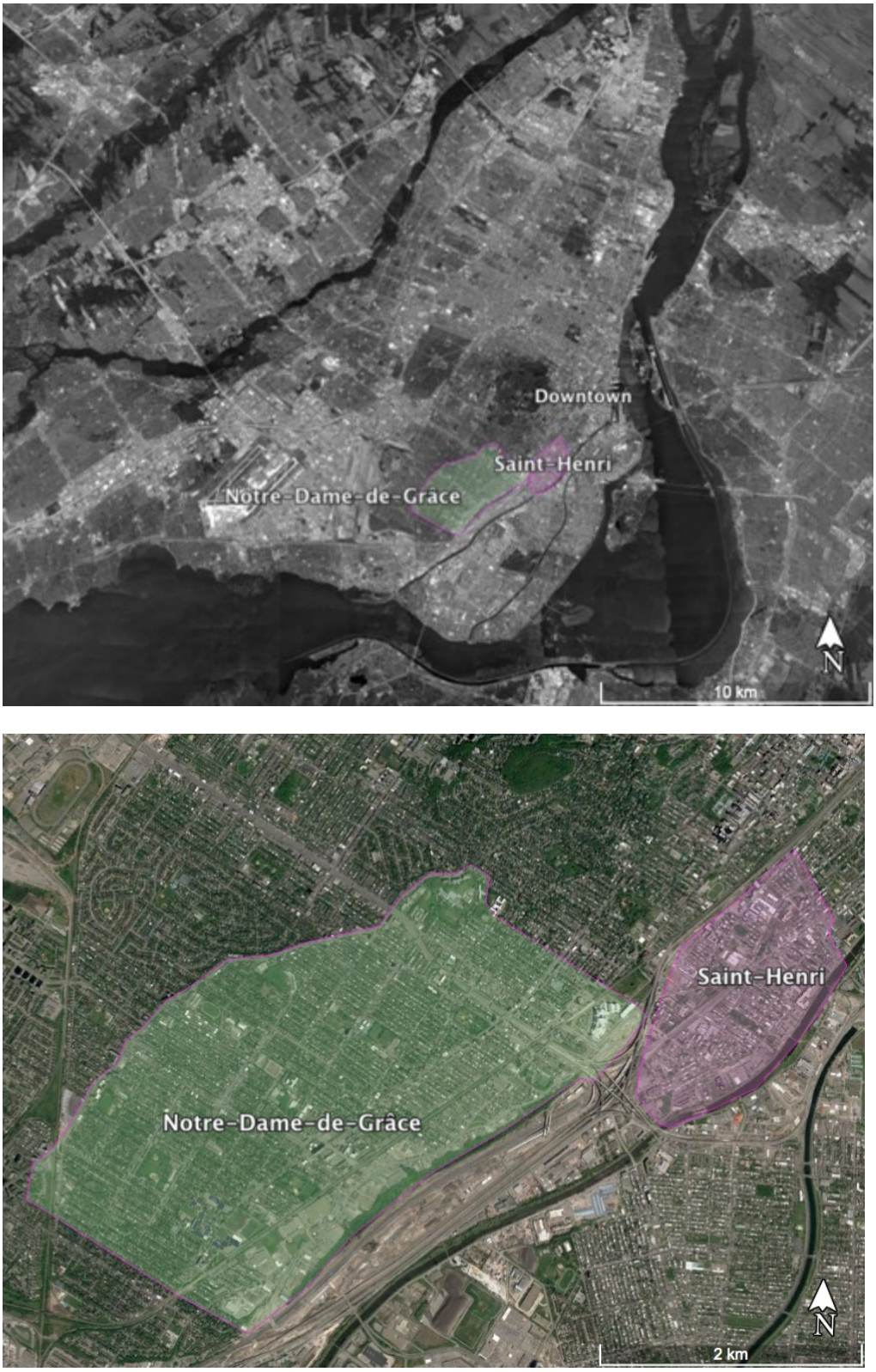


Figure 2 The areas of study in Montreal
Saint-Henri and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Google Earth, 2017a)

Another reason for choosing these areas for study was that they made for a productive comparison. Despite their proximity, the processes of gentrification have been quite different in each. While Saint-Henri has seen a much more generalised transformation, NDG's gentrification has occurred in pockets, as I describe below. Further, the difference in levels of social housing—where Saint-Henri has much more availability—has also shaped the neighbourhoods significantly. Aesthetically, the neighbourhoods are different: while Saint-Henri has a more working-class, industrial, yet dense and village-like feel, NDG is more suburban, with detached houses and wider, tree-lined streets. Demographically the neighbourhoods are quite different, with a higher proportion of recent immigrants and Anglophones in NDG (see Table 5 below).

From the literature, it is clear that both neighbourhoods have long been experiencing gentrification.[29] From 1971-1991, sections of western Saint-Henri first gentrified, accelerating later in eastern Saint-Henri, remarkably, leading David Ley to remark that development across the Lachine Canal 'would provide the Canadian counterpart to the imputed gentrification of Harlem' (Ley, 1996: 101; cited in Twigge-Molecey, 2009), the comparison being that Saint-Henri was seen as an extremely undesirable working class slum at the time. Ley excluded much of NDG from his analysis but noted evidence of gentrification in the eastern section (Ibid.). In 2003, using 1983-1996 census data, Saint-Henri and NDG exhibited 'marginal gentrification', that is,

[29] There have been no studies using census data on gentrification in both neighbourhoods since 2006. Partly this is because of a gap in census data that occurred during this time. In Canada, the census is conducted every 5 years. However, because of changes to the census under the Conservative government, which made the long-form census non-mandatory, the 2011 census is often excluded and not considered representative for analysis on residential data. 2016 census results were published in 2017 during the time of my field research, and there has been little analysis of the progress of gentrification in NDG and Saint-Henri from this updated census data. Likely there will be interesting changes, but I didn't have the capacity to do an analysis of the progression of gentrification from 2006-2016, and had to rely on available data elsewhere. Statistics Canada publishes a census profile of NDG-Westmount and the Sud-Ouest Borough (2017a; 2017b). Centraide Montreal published profiles of Sud-Ouest (which includes Saint-Henri) and NDG in 2019, using 2016 census data (Centraide, 2019a; 2019b). However, these profiles do not compare relevant figures over time, and their 2015-2016 profiles are no longer available on their website. The City of Montreal also published profiles based on 2016 census data results (Ville de Montreal, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c), however, these are split according to electoral districts, and though there is a full profile of NDG, Saint-Henri is unfortunately split in half, thus making this data less useful. Again, there is also no presentation of data over time, and important data, such as residents using social housing, are not included.

> [N]eighbourhood change associated with middle-class households who could be summarised as being [...] richer in cultural capital than in economic capital [...] a specific process of neighbourhood renewal distinct from gentrification, rather than as a temporary prelude to the inevitable transformation of the neighbourhoods into new wealthy inner-city enclaves (Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003: 2456).

Shortly afterwards, using data from 1961-2001, Walks and Maraanen (2008b) determined Saint-Henri along with NDG and the surrounding areas to be part of a 'gentrification frontier'—that is, a cluster of incomplete gentrification 'which makes further investments in previous waves safer and helps to solidify their status' and suggests likely accelerated gentrification (30). Saint-Henri was seeing 'incomplete gentrification' while NDG was marked as having 'potential for future gentrification' (Walks and Maraanen, 2008a: 4). In addition, the area of Saint-Henri was seeing significant new-build gentrification, while lower NDG was not seeing significant gentrification, but upper areas of NDG like Monkland were seeing 'standard' gentrification as well as new-build and conversions (Walks and Maraanen, 2008b). Interestingly, the area by the Lachine Canal was identified as a rare case of new-build gentrification *without* other forms of gentrification (conversions of existing housing stock; see Figures 6 and 7). In short, gentrification was complex, but progressively advancing in these areas. Using updated 2006 census data, Twigge-Molecey (2009) found that in Saint-Henri there is considerable gentrification underway—underlining that the process has sped up since 2001, with the exception of the westernmost area of the neighbourhood. The report highlights certain indicators supporting this conclusion:

> [T]he marked increase in the proportion of owner-occupied households; the increases in average dwelling values and average rents; marked increases in average household and average personal incomes; increases in the proportion of the population aged 15+ with a university degree or certificate; and increases in the proportion of professionals and senior managers in the neighbourhood. (75).

In comparison, in Lower NDG, standard gentrification continues apace in small pockets, while other census tracts are not seeing all of the same indicators of gentrification across the board (*Ibid.*). Though Twigge-Molecey's analysis is limited to lower NDG and to census data from 2006, and there is no satellite or photographic analysis, the area does present an interesting site for more research, as commercial gentrification may still be occurring and there are still many long-term residents living in the area. In summary, both neighbourhoods have seen forms of gentrification since at least 1996. While gentrification was progressing slowly in 1980s-1990s, it

has since progressed and likely, pending further analysis of updated census data from 2016, has accelerated.

Photo 4 Apartment buildings in Saint-Henri vs. NDG

Those in Saint-Henri (Left) tend to be smaller and in a townhouse style, while those in NDG (Right) larger.

Relevant demographics	Saint-Henri	Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	Montreal (Census Metropolitan Area)
Total population	17,055 (8% population growth since 2011 and 18% since 1991)	67,475 (% change NA)	4,098,927 (3% population growth since 2011 and 27% since 1991)
Percentage of renter households	71%	65%	60%
Percentage of renter households who dedicate 30% or more of their income to rent	33%	40%[f]	37%
Anglophone	23%	36%	16%
Recent Immigrants[a]	20% (China, Iran, France, Lebanon[d])	39% (Iran, China, France, Philippines)	34% (Haiti, France, Morocco, Algeria, Italy, China, Lebanon)
Percentage visible minorities[b]	37%[d] (Predominantly Chinese (22%) and Arab (20%)[d])	36% (Predominantly Black (11%) and Chinese (6%))	33% (Predominantly Black (30%) and Arab (21%))
Percentage of residents living in social or subsidised housing (cooperatives, senior residencies)	14.4%[d]	5.4%[e]	9.3%
Percent of private units are condominiums	30%	12%	23%
Low income[c]	34%	24%	23%
Other data	10% decrease in renter households from 2006 to 2016. Largest number of subsidised housing units in all Montreal boroughs	Sectors of Saint-Raymond, Westhaven, and Walkley-Fielding have especially high poverty, while other sectors are quite wealthy.	

Table 9 Relevant demographics in Saint-Henri and NDG

All data are drawn from 2016 census unless otherwise indicated. [a]Defined as people who have emigrated to Canada in their lifetime, permanent residents, refugee claimants, or people with a study permit. [b]Defined by Statistics Canada as 'persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.' [c] As defined by Statistics Canada, see Statistics Canada, 2015). [d]Indicates data for Ville-Marie--Le Sud-Ouest--Île-des-Soeurs, [e]for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce--Westmount (No other data available; this should not be seen as the same as actual neighbourhood demographics, but rather offers a picture where data is lacking).[f]The relatively high percentage of residents who dedicate a high amount of their income to rent in NDG should be contextualised with the fact that many residents in Saint-Henri live in social housing units and therefore dedicate very little of their income to rent, however, it is considered an important proxy for the level of poverty in the neighbourhood by local community groups. Source: Statistics Canada, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; Centraide, 2019a; 2019b

Saint-Henri: from working-class industrial district to urban village

Until about the 1960s, Saint-Henri was known as a working-class industrial district. It was in large part culturally and demographically homogenous, inhabited mostly by French-Canadian Catholics, though there was also some presence of Irish and African-Canadians (Favreau, 1989; cited in Twigge-Molecey, 2013). The main thoroughfare, rue Notre-Dame, is also the central commercial hub of the neighbourhood. The Atwater Market, an iconic Art Deco building facing the Lachine Canal, has long been one of the key public markets in Montreal. Following deindustrialisation in the 1950s and 60s, the neighbourhood began to decline and unemployment increased. As a response to this decline, and in line with neighbourhood-based working-class movements around Montreal, Saint-Henri became the birthplace of the first citizens' committees in the city (Collin, 1977; McGraw, 1978; Favreau, 1989; Hamel, 1991; Doré, 1992; Bélanger and Lévesque, 2004; Mills, 2010).

Beginning in the 1960s, residents began to move to the suburbs if they were able to, and the population started declining, from 26,699 inhabitants in 1966 to 13,563 in 2001 (Twigge-Molecey, 2013). In 1992, the Atwater Market was renovated. In 2002, the Lachine Canal, a key industrial thoroughfare that had stopped operating in the 1950s, was renovated and turned into a green space, which was then followed by the development of new-build condominiums and conversion of former factories into lofts along the park. Shortly after, new cafés and businesses opened along rue Notre-Dame. More recently, the Turcot Interchange, one of the main highways into the city, began renovations, and the McGill University Hospital Centre, a CAD$1.3 billion project, has been built adjacent to the neighbourhood. As a largely working-class neighbourhood seeing a mix of new-build, old-build, and retail gentrification, it has been one of the flash points of gentrification struggles in the city of Montreal.

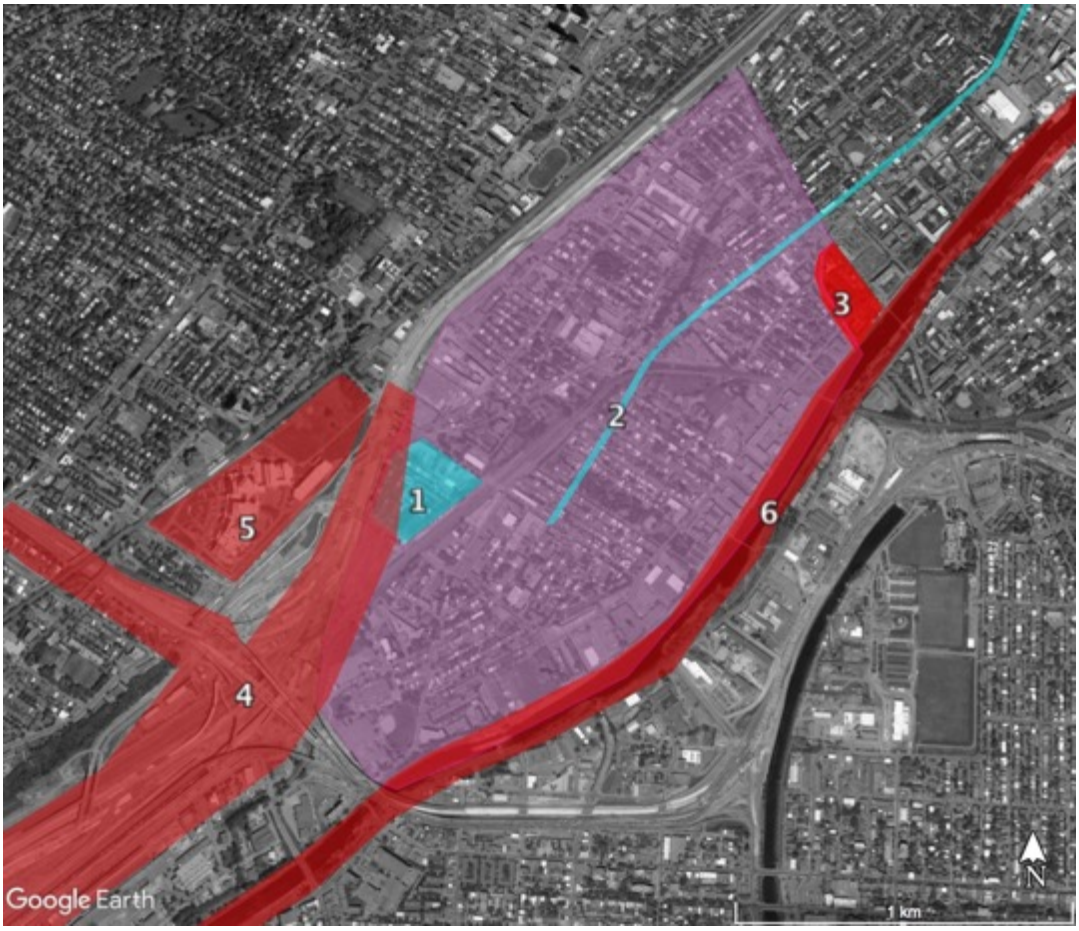


Figure 3 Map of Saint-Henri

Numbered and coloured areas represent relevant sites for research (see Table 10), where RED is new construction and infrastructure, PURPLE designates the boundaries of Saint-Henri, and CYAN designates specific areas under study. (Google Earth, 2017b)

1

The neighbourhood of Village Des Tanneries, which was a particular focus of my research as it is feeling pressure from both the Turcot and MUHC development, and slow socio-economic changes of population

2

Rue Notre-Dame, which has seen a surge in new businesses catering to wealthier residents and tourists, and closures of businesses catering to low-income residents

3

Atwater Market, renovated in 1992

4

The Turcot Interchange, where renovation started in 2010

5		The McGill University Hospital Centre Glenn Campus, opened in 2015
6		The Lachine Canal, redeveloped in 2002

Table 10 Relevant sites for research in Saint-Henri

Notre-Dame-de-Grâce: a neighbourhood of contrasts

NDG, in contrast to Saint-Henri, is a much more diverse neighbourhood—both in terms of income and ethnicity. The neighbourhood lies just North of the Falaises St-Jacques and Turcot Interchange that separate it from Saint-Henri, and stretches between the wealthy boroughs of Westmount to the East, Hampstead and Côte St-Luc to the North, and the more suburban Lachine to the South. Housing is different in style to more Francophone areas in Montreal; many apartment buildings are separated rather than in townhouse style, and much of the neighbourhood is dominated by lone-

standing single or two-family houses. It is known as one of the more Anglophone neighbourhoods in the city. Still partially farmland until the 1930s and only integrated into the Montreal municipality in 1910, the area was considered a home for upwardly-mobile middle class for most of the 20th century. Despite this, pockets of poverty have always existed in the neighbourhood, and it is today considered to have some of the highest rates of inequality in Montreal, as measured through income (Centraide, 2019b). Initially inhabited by Anglophone and French Canadian farmers and suburbanites, the area became increasingly populated by Irish, Jewish, Eastern European, and then more recently by African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian immigrants (*Ibid.*). Many of Montreal's Irish and African-Canadian communities originally from Southern areas of the city have also settled there (*Ibid.*). NDG merged with the Cotes-Des-Neiges borough in 2002, and together they form the most diverse borough in Montreal, both in terms of income and ethnicity (*Ibid.*). NDG is also known for its vibrant community life, with a tightly networked civil society, consisting of religious groups, cultural centres, community food spaces, and not-for-profits defining much of the character of the neighbourhood.

Figure 4 Map of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

Numbered and colored areas represent relevant sites for research (see Table 11 below), where RED is new construction and infrastructure, GREEN designates the boundaries of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and CYAN designates specific areas under study. (Google Earth, 2017b).

1

Monkland Street, or ‘Monkland Village’, which saw renewal and upscaling in the early 2000s.

2

Sherbrooke street, which is seeing closures of groceries and modest retail gentrification

3

The neighbourhood of St-Raymond, which continues to have a large low-income population but is seeing real estate pressure from the new hospital

4

The Turcot Interchange, where renovation started in 2010

5

The McGill University Hospital Centre Glenn Campus, opened in 2015

Table 11 Relevant sites for research in NDG

In the literature, NDG had been identified as a neighbourhood facing 'upgrading' (i.e. development and influx of wealthier residents in a neighbourhood not previously predominantly working class; Van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003), and as a 'frontier' in gentrification processes to come (Walks and Maaranen, 2008a; Twigge-Molecey, 2009). In contrast to Saint-Henri, gentrification in NDG has been less dramatic. In the early 2000s, Monkland Street was renovated in great part due to its proximity to wealthy neighbourhoods like Hampstead and its already-present diners and cafés, with several high-end bakeries, boutiques, and restaurants moving in and buying out old businesses. The area was nicknamed 'Monkland Village' by the real estate sector. Even more recently, Sherbrooke Street saw gradual replacement of establishments and a steady advancement of businesses oriented toward high-income residents, as it is the main artery connecting NDG to Westmount and offers is well connected to the city's public transport through its bus service. And the afore-mentioned construction of the MUHC mega-hospital has also raised concerns that gentrification would start to occur in the area (Twigge-Molecey, 2009).

Gentrification is not as rapid as it has been in Saint-Henri. Visually, the neighbourhood feels quite similar to when I conducted my first interviews in 2013, and the predicted effects of the MUHC seem muted at first glance. In terms of demographics, the shift has not been as large, and there are still certain areas that are considered dangerous by local residents. However, Monkland Boulevard, or 'Monkland Village', already feels completely saturated by high-income users, being a

shopping and Sunday brunch destination for those living in the wealthier neighbouring areas of Hampstead, Westmount, and Cote-St-Luc. Sherbrooke is slowly transforming as well, with the arrival of boutiques, galleries, and organic specialty stores, and the shuttering of an earlier wave of restaurants and coops. Community groups like the NDG Food Depot are also feeling the pressure, and several churches have been sold to developers. Notably, NDG has seen closures and forced evictions of many low-cost bakeries, grocery stores, churches, and community groups, especially those on Sherbrooke. Finally, the area of St-Raymond is currently seeing slow change in residential demographics, in part driven by the opening of the MUHC and the slow replacement of the elderly residents and homeowners with young couples (Twigge-Molecey, 2009). In the mid-2000s, the municipality planned to replace a large area called Benny Farms, until then used as social housing for veterans, with a high-end development. However, it met resistance by the community, who successfully campaigned for it to become a mixed affordable housing project, containing a clinic, a YMCA, a park, and sports grounds. At the time, however, residents and activists did not see this as part of gentrification but rather as a result of government cuts and privatisation (Serge, 2013). In NDG, there is no clear-cut 'battle' against gentrification—the neighbourhood stretches between rich enclaves and dense apartment blocks, and community groups are far less combative than in Saint-Henri. In comparison to Saint-Henri, as well, there has been less obvious new-build development taking place and fewer campaigns of resistance by community groups or activists. Yet, things are definitely changing. For those residents who still live in NDG and are unable to move lest they lose their low rent or access to social housing, the question remains how these 'pockets' of poverty are affected by this slower process of upgrading, and what effect this has had on their daily lives?

Hanoi enters the global land rush

Hanoi patterns of gentrification do not fit easily with the phases of gentrification identified by Hackworth (2002), and they merit further explanation and detailed exploration. In the following section, I locate Hanoi's gentrification within the broader political and economic context, laying out how urban development is occurring and the reasoning behind selecting the two areas I studied as sites of gentrification. This then leads me to describe the case study areas of Tay Ho and Linh

Dam in detail, outlining their history and relevant (or available) demographic information.

Political and economic context

Vietnam is a small country, about the size of Italy, with a large population (94.6 million inhabitants) that is increasingly becoming urbanised. Its political system is ostensibly Marxist-Leninist, but now more and more state capitalist. Local government functions through a pyramid-style system, where party officials are nominated and elected by block or building (50-200 residents), and have some degree of autonomy. They report to the *hamlet*, which in turn fits under the *ward*, which is part of a *district,* which is controlled by the *province*, and finally by the central party. Parallel to this structure, organisations like the Women's Union, the Farmer's Cooperative, religious institutions, and so on also operate on a local-to-national level, overseen and controlled by the state. Under this system, there is room for both relative autonomy and top-down, hierarchical decision-making (Wells-Dang, 2010; Albrecht *et al.*, 2010). It also allows for the emergence and tacit consent to informality in both labour and property regimes, which operates through personal relationships with these elected officials on the local level (Leaf, 2015). This pyramidal structure, which includes all political organisation, means that civil society as a 'third sector' is largely absent in Vietnamese political economy, or does not exist in the same way as it does in Western countries, as there are few formal institutions outside the state (Wells-Dang, 2014; Kerkvliet, 2001). The government also commits to providing basic services such as health care, education, infrastructure, and, previously, social housing and food. In recent decades, Vietnam has seen a fast rate of economic growth as it has become increasingly integrated into the world economy. This has also come with significant rural-urban migration (with 19.7% of urban residents in the country being migrants; UNDESA, 2017) the growth of a large informal sector and its consequent regulation and criminalisation by authorities, and environmental and labour conflicts.

Starting in the 1980s, Vietnam experienced a transition period (*Đổi Mới*) in which the government relaxed regulations on private enterprise, opened up its markets to foreign investors, and eventually further integrated into the global economy. A significant part of this process was a series of Land Laws, the first of which was passed in 1993, which formalised the ability of the private citizen to buy and sell land

use rights. Also beginning in the 1990s, the Vietnamese government started signing development contracts between national and foreign construction companies (Wells-Dang et al., 2015; see Appendix G, which is a timeline of important land laws). The strategy was to open up the national market to the global economy, thereby injecting the economy with capital and investment. This process kick-started rapid urban development in the two largest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and smaller, 'middle' cities like Danang. Tourism also became a growing industry and source of income for many (Hayton, 2010). In the succeeding decades, new laws were passed that successively opened the country more and more to foreign investment, and finally in 2015, buying and selling real estate by foreigners was legalised—previously, foreign investors had to find a Vietnamese partner to make such investments.

As a result of the Đổi Mới period, the Vietnamese food system has also seen significant changes. The formalisation of private enterprise led to a boom in small trade, as well as a rise in street food culture. Further, Vietnamese cities were previously in great part providing for themselves, with 44% of Hanoi's food supply coming from urban and peri-urban areas in 2001 (Anh *et al.* 2004). While no similar research has been conducted since 2001, it is clear that food systems have diversified, with much of the local produce exported and, in turn, an influx of imported produce from countries like China and Thailand (Huong, 2013a; 2013b; Gerber *et al.*, 2014; Pulliat, 2015). In short, urban growth has led to a transformation of the relationship between peri-urban agriculture and the urban population.

Rapid modernisation has also brought new demands for consumer goods, and, in tandem, different dietary expectations. While international fast food remains a small part of people's diet in Vietnam, there is growing interest in international foods and pre-packaged convenience foods, as well as Western-style restaurant experiences. Further, both large supermarkets and smaller 7-Eleven-style convenience stores are opening at more locations across the country and seeing more interest from Vietnamese, a very recent development (Jensen and Peppard, 2007; Figuié and Moustier, 2009; Mergenthaler *et al.,* 2009; Huong *et al.,* 2013a; 2013b; Gerber *et al.* 2014; Shields, 2013; Wertheim-Heck *et al.* 2014). Middle-class people are increasingly interested in organic products, with several new organic chains and retailers emerging and becoming more and more popular. Part of the increased interest, at least from the middle class, is the huge rise in food safety concerns across

the country (Ehlert and Faltmann, 2019). This is partly due to the significant use of pesticides, high pressure on farmers to compete in a global market, and the rapid industrialisation of food processing. There are many cases of food poisoning and investigations of malpractice of producers, which are then broadcast widely in state media—and this is one of the most popular TV shows. Vietnam could be today considered to be facing a country-wide food scare.

Just as these changes in the food system are occurring, municipalities have initiated multiple crackdowns on itinerant and informal street vending. The informal sale of prepared and unprepared foods, as well as other consumer goods such as clothing, is a common way for Vietnamese to earn extra income or to support themselves. The informal sector represents 32% and 34% of the working population in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City respectively (Cling *et al.* 2011). At the same time, public markets have an uncertain future, with several markets in major cities having been transformed into malls or entirely torn down (Geertman, 2011; Geertman *et al.,* 2011). Traditional public markets, street vending, and other forms of informal food access in Vietnam are, therefore, increasingly under threat, and there is an intentional government policy to support privatised food retail that is more formalised but also often less accessible for the majority of the population.

Another important feature of the Vietnamese food system is the continued reliance on subsistence gardening, urban agriculture, and household vegetable growing for leisure. Though today many households grow vegetables due to increased concern over food safety (Ehlert and Faltmann, 2019), these practices were also a response to food insecurity during the 'subsidy era' of state communism, when, at least officially, households received food from rations, which did not adequately meet household need—as underlined by the country-wide food shortage in 1988. Yet, the state also encouraged households to grow their own vegetables, a policy which was formalised through the allotment of 'land for vegetables' in each village and for each household (Labbé, 2015). Today, urban agriculture remains an important component of Vietnamese food provision, though it is increasingly threatened by the expansion of industrial, residential, and commercial urban space into the peripheries. As a result, many households seek to use small plots of informal or undeveloped land near their residences for urban agriculture (Van den Berg *et al.,* 2003; Anh *et al.*, 2004; Thi Tinh, *et al.*, 2007; Lee *et al.*, 2010). In this way, urban agriculture and household food

production, which has historically been an essential practice for Vietnamese households, is transforming due to contemporary concerns over food safety, as well as the urbanisation of the countryside.

Hanoi's urban development

South East Asian urbanisation does not follow the classic 'Western' pattern of radial peri-urban suburbanisation, as Terry McGee has observed in detail through his study of 'desakota' development styles (McGee 1991; 2009). Desakota urbanisation—derived from Indonesian meaning, 'village' and 'city'—involves dense and variegated intermingling of urban clusters and agriculture along main routes. Hanoi has followed this pattern to a great extent, as it is often considered an agglomeration of villages and towns surrounding a smaller commercial core (Fanchette, 2008; 2018). As I explain below, Hanoi's peri-urbanisation has, since the 1990s, involved experimentation with diverse kinds of development including informal self-construction (but not slums), high-rise apartment buildings, luxury gated communities, and state-led development filling in 'between' the peri-urban villages that existed previously (Geertman, 2003; 2007; Fanchette, 2008; Labbé and Boudreau, 2011).

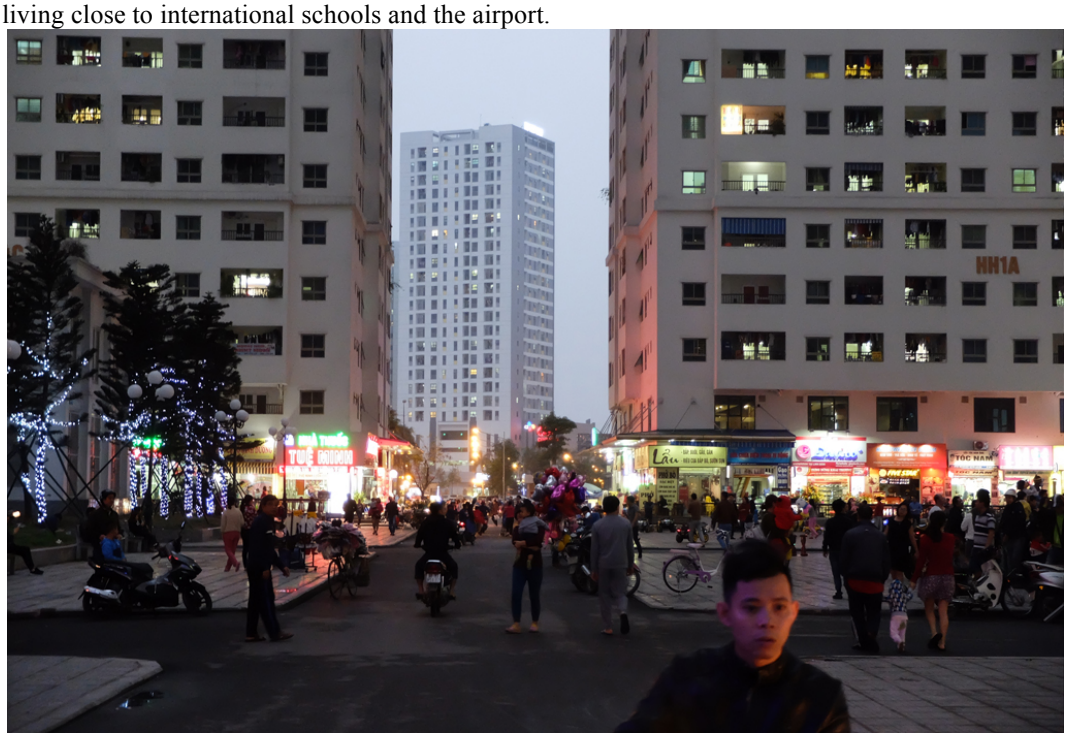
Hanoi's centuries-old city-village relationship, with Hanoi's centre functioning as a marketplace for the surrounding villages specialised in different crafts, is today breaking down to some degree (Fanchette, 2018). As peri-urban villages become integrated into the urban fabric, they themselves also see patterns of urbanisation, involving upscaling and the arrival of newcomers and in-fill. Furthermore, the continued integration of previously isolated Vietnam into the global economy has also accelerated the disruption of craft production at the village level, itself a unique outcome of communist and post-communist isolation and kinship-based entrepreneurialism (Labbé, 2013). For example, Tay Ho district, formerly dominated by several 'craft villages', has today been largely urbanised and traditional craft industry is now almost non-existent. Tay Ho's villages, like other peri-urban villages, are more and more becoming integrated in the city's formal labour market and thus become commuter residential areas, rather than being sites of production themselves (Fanchette, 2018).

There are several typologies of housing production in Hanoi (Phe, 2002; UN Habitat, 2008, see Table 13). Before 1989, state housing provision, called *khu tập thể*, was dominated by either social housing, or work-related housing (e.g. housing for factory workers). Starting in the 1980s, and in part due to the failure of state housing to provide for the housing needs of the population, there was an explosion of informal housing construction by households. This became untenable for the state as they sought more control over urban development (Geertman, 2007; Hayton, 2010). Starting in 1989, the state became interested in expanding to new kinds of housing construction, experimenting with different models. Linh Dam, the first state-controlled housing development intended for the real estate market, started construction in 1997. This was an early model in the *khu đô thị mới* (new urban areas), which eventually became the dominant mode of housing construction and also helped to subdue demand for and building of informal housing through the development of new formal real estate markets (Geertman, 2007; Labbé and Boudreau, 2011; Labbé *et al.*, 2010). Following the development of Ciputra International City, Hanoi's first gated community in the 1990s, the Hanoi government started approving a succession of new urban areas in the periphery of the city.

State housing (1960-1989). This form of housing was built during the state socialist era and is still in use throughout the city. Pictured above is the classic ‘chicken cage’ housing which residents improved over the years.

Informal housing construction (1990-2010). This form of endogenous housing development takes place on farmland and currently more often in low-lying floodplains, where large-scale development projects are more costly.

New urban area: Ciputra International City (1995-present). This was the first gated community in Hanoi, built on former farmland adjacent to Tay Ho, and was seen as an experiment in new forms of private development. It is still under construction and is largely targeted as foreigners who prefer living close to international schools and the airport.



New urban area: Linh Dam (1995-present). This apartment complex, built on former farmland was the first private-public development oriented toward the new lower middle class, seen as an experiment in new forms of private housing. Different phases are still under construction.

New urban area: Stranded developments (2000-2010). There are many development projects which have not come to fruition due to failed investment in particular caused by financial downturns.


New urban area: Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính (2000-2015). This planned new urban area, built on former farmland, was the first of its kind led by private developers and is oriented toward young urban professionals and the new cosmopolitan urban class.

New urban area: Royal City (circa 2015). This is one of several compact elite luxury housing developments closer in the city centre, built on former industrial land.

New urban area: Mulberry Lane (2015-present). This is a newer kind of housing development, with foreigners and upper-middle income residents as its primary market. It is built in the newly developed peri-urban area, often on former farmland or industrial land.

New urban area: Times City (circa 2015). Like Royal City, Times City was part of a wave of luxury elite housing built closer to the downtown area, built on former industrially-zoned land.


New urban area: EcoPark (2016-present). This is a large planned gated community on the far outskirts of the city, intended for the new middle and upper middle classes and wealthy foreigners. This represents a new form of urban development, built on extremely large swathes of farmland at a significant distance from the urban centre. A big part of its marketing is its lack of air pollution and green living.

Table 12 Various typologies of housing development in Hanoi.

Urbanisation and urban upscaling are linked processes through both endogenous upscaling done by homeowners and exogenous investment by development

companies. In most cases, these new urban areas are built on former farmland. In the case of private development, farmers are usually paid market price for their farmland. For state-involved development, however, farmers are often paid far below market price, leading to huge profits for the real estate sector. In other cases, such as those closer to the city, development occurs in former industrial sites. The logic of the 'rent gap' (see Chapter 1) drives development, as investors seek high margins of profit for low costs, and will often partner with local municipalities to expropriate farmland from villagers to build new urban areas. Potential ground rent varies according to distance from city centre and target housing market (luxury, middle class, rural-to-urban migrants). Projects vary from luxury high-rises to gated communities and apartment blocks meant for the new middle class. New developments often come with supermarkets, new restaurants, malls, private schools and clinics, and convenience stores. On a household scale, private owners—from wealthy middle-class homeowners to relatively poor farmers who nevertheless have property due to the communist land reform system—will often use whatever capital they have available to build either informal housing for migrants and students, or more permanent housing to rent out (see Figure 5 for a typology of urban areas and their relationship to potential ground rent). An important step in Hanoi's recent development was the agglomeration of several peri-urban districts into the Hanoi province. Starting with Tay Ho in 1995, this process accelerated with the incorporation of surrounding areas into Hanoi in 2003 and 2009. Hanoi 'tripled its area and doubled its population' (Fanchette, 2018:12; see Appendix G). Paired with a decentralisation of approval for development contracts to the local level, this process was key in accelerating and streamlining urban development.

The influx of global investment capital and the rise in international construction partnerships also drove urbanisation. Considered to be lagging behind other East Asian and South East Asian cities for many decades, Hanoi's leaders began to encourage and experiment with partnerships with international developers in the early 2000s as local access to capital, construction materials, and expertise were considered inadequate to the task of building large new urban areas (Labbé and Boudreau, 2011; Fanchette, 2018). State construction companies also increasingly partnered with international companies. After two decades of experimentation—which included the financial crashes in 1997 and 2010 that set back the Vietnamese real estate market

significantly and stranded huge amounts of capital in incomplete and failed projects—this process has been streamlined and Hanoi now seems to be catching up with other cities in the region in terms of potential for investment, integration with the global speculative housing market, and pace of development.

Another important factor in Hanoi's development is the role of foreign state investments and international organisations like the World Bank. As part of their foreign development profiles, countries like Japan, which offered the capital for a bridge connecting Hanoi's new airport to the city, as well as a new commuter rail system, are supporting Hanoi's development primarily through foreign aid, but also through consultations, expertise, and government-funded research. The World Bank, for its part, consistently underwrites the costs of many infrastructural projects and utilities (World Bank, 2019). For example, the commuter rail system, Hanoi Metro, conceived as a rapid transit line that links new urban areas to the urban core, to be completed by 2023, involved the consultation of French, Chinese, and Japanese companies and was in part funded by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, and Chinese companies (Iwata, 2007; Tatarski, 2017; Rush, 2018; IEG Review Team, 2018).

Hanoi's recent expansion has been called a 'land rush' (DiGregorio, 2011), and a 'storm' (Fanchette, 2008). It has also been bitter sweet. On the one hand, Hanoians have increased access to services, more flow of and access to capital, modern lifestyles and access to global commodities, and a growing middle class. On the other hand, there are many negative sides to development identified in the literature. Peri-urban areas, often affected by state land grabs of farmland and resulting compensation, are also beset by crime, gambling, and drug addiction (DiGregorio, 2011). Food security and agricultural livelihoods have been transformed, with a switch from reliance on local produce and subsistence farming, to imported, processed, and highly treated foods (Jensen and Peppard, 2007).

The city also suffers from lack of access to adequate infrastructure, such as clean water, sanitary disposal of waste, electricity, and public transportation (Albrecht *et al.,* 2010). Flooding remains a major problem. Though periodic flooding has been in part remediated by the construction of dams further up the Red River, concretisation and filling up of lakes for housing development has decreased water surfaces necessary to absorb heavy rains (*Ibid.*). There is also significant dispossession of peri-urban

farmers who can no longer live off the land and are forced to seek alternative means of income—many enter the informal sector and become street vendors (Cling *et al.,* 2011). Along with this has come the increasing pressure on the government by farmers, who organise protests and grassroots actions, often visible in public (Nguyen, 2009a). This has been met with censorship, crack-downs, and intimidation by the government (Nguyen, 2007; Wells-Dang, 2010; Kerkvliet, 2014). Migrants, who do not receive full benefits of healthcare and education as they are not registered as residents in Hanoi, live in cramped and insalubrious conditions (Linh and Thao 2011). More generally, urban development in Hanoi is rife with corruption, legalised rent-seeking by elites, government hand-outs to developers, and unequal distribution of profits to the growing elite class (Hayton, 2010).

Is gentrification happening in Hanoi?

One question that needs to be assessed is whether gentrification can indeed be said to be taking place in Hanoi. As has already been noted (Chapter 1), the term gentrification has been argued to be less useful in non-Western contexts (Ghertner, 2015; Maloutas, 2012), due to differences in land regimes, and 'contextual attachments' that come with the word that may obscure processes actually occurring on the ground. Yip and Tran (2016) argue that gentrification is not a useful term in the context of Hanoi due to Vietnam's particular land regimes, where original residents can actually profit from increasing land prices due to the history of communist land reform. Potter and Labbé (2020) argue that, though we could not call these processes in Hanoi gentrification, there is nevertheless 'livelihoods dispossession' and 'value grabbing' (the latter referring to Andreucci *et al.*, 2017) occurring. Both papers suggest that using the term gentrification is complicated in the Vietnamese context—however, this depends largely on the flexibility of the definition of gentrification. These authors use a largely constrained definition of gentrification, which necessarily involves physical displacement and a sense of injustice due to displacement.

Though it is true that direct displacement from housing is largely not occurring in these cases, there are other patterns that are worth mentioning. First, as explained in the section above, Hanoi's urban development is fragmented, with different areas experiencing different kinds of development. While on the whole development may not be called gentrification, certain kinds of development certainly should be called

gentrification. In Figure 5, I highlight several typologies of development—differentiated according to rent gap and distance from centre. According to this typology, for example, Tay Ho is considered an extreme case of a 'desirable peri-urban village', which has become a luxury destination, while Linh Dam would be considered a 'new urban area for the middle class'. The implication is that, as urban development moves out from the urban centre, different rent gaps can be captured by developers. High rent gaps occur, for example, in new-build housing for luxury development and the middle class on former farmland or industrial sites, while floodplains have relatively low rent gaps due to the environmental risk for investment. Accordingly, informal construction by individual households often takes place in floodplains, while large-scale new-build construction will take place on farmlands or former industrial sites. In particular I want to draw attention to two categories, 'desirable peri-urban villages' and 'undesirable peri-urban villages'. The latter refers to existing villages that are hard to reach because of lack of infrastructure, or have some other negative attributes (adjacent to brownfield sites, for example). A desirable urban village, however—such as that of Tay Ho, or the one adjacent to Linh Dam—often has certain amenities (green space, large bodies of water, markets, safety) that make it appealing to wealthy professionals and the elite. It is in these areas, I would argue, that we can see clear cases of gentrification.

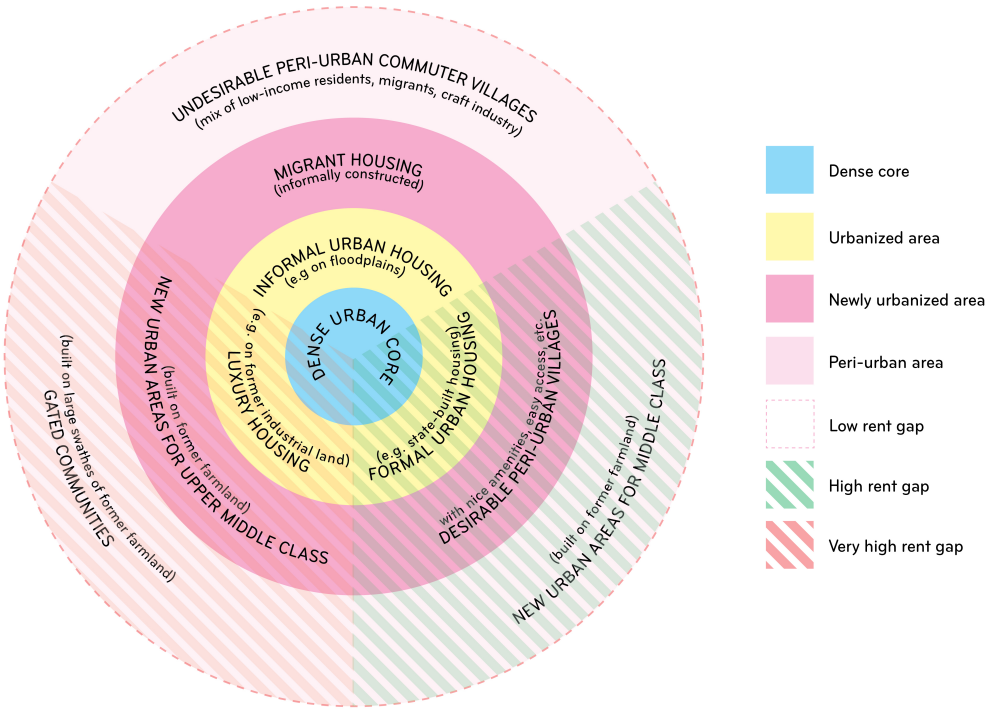


Figure 5 Typologies of urbanisation in Hanoi's land rush. Image by the author.

Each third of the circle represents different levels of rent gap, that is, amount of profit to be made by developers or households. Larger circles roughly indicate distance from centre. This does not imply that urbanisation is progressing in a concentric way, where first the centre is developed and when that is exhausted, peri-urban areas become urbanised. Rather, development is more kaleidoscopic, occurring both in the centre (e.g. luxury housing) and in peri-urban areas (e.g. gated communities, informal housing).

Gentrification, in these 'villages', may not look like it does in the West, but it is certainly taking place. Tay Ho, my main case study site, has been covered in international and national press as a 'new creative quarter' and a centre for leisure, eating out, and arts (Rosen, 2014; The Word, 2016). A visitor to Tay Ho will quickly notice the gated villas, vegan restaurants, frozen yoghurt shops, specialised grocery stores, and high-end cafés. Tay Ho has also been identified as one of the three areas in Hanoi with the highest property prices (Comber *et al.*, 2016), though there is no reliable official data on real estate value. In Linh Dam, my other case study site, the original villages are completely surrounded by new-build development, which hosts supermarkets, organic food shops, and high-end restaurants (see Appendix H). Though many original villagers remain, many houses look like villas, with high walls and security systems; one real estate agent estimated that 90% of inhabitants of the 'village' are not original villagers (code 46). New buyers are young urban professionals who prefer a village-like atmosphere over the adjacent apartment blocks (code 46; code 85; Labbé, 2015). Importantly, there is little direct displacement (Labbé, 2015; Yip and Tran, 2016; Potter and Labbé, 2020) because original villagers are dispossessed of their farmland but not of their residential land, and they can then take advantage of rising real estate prices, becoming landlords in the process.

Yet, in both Tay Ho and Linh Dam, we can talk about 'phenomenological displacement' occurring (see Chapter 1 for a discussion)—where people might not be directly displaced but face experiential displacement, e.g. of their community or places that are important to them.[30] Urban development processes in Hanoi have affected both people's livelihoods and cultural spaces. For example, following expropriation of farmland, many who are not able to capitalise on rising real estate prices are forced to go into the informal sector, becoming street vendors in the inner

[30] Though it may be more appropriate to call the process 'life displacement' (see chapter 5 for a definition).

city (Labbé, 2015; Nguyen, 2007; 2009b). The destruction of market shrines[31] in Hanoi's urban renewal processes has also had an important effect on people's cultural and spiritual life (Hüwelmeier, 2018). The displacement that comes with urban development can be traumatic and life-changing and does not affect all villagers equally—those that do not have the connections or social capital often do not benefit from the land rush and are forced to sell off their residential land (Labbé, 2015; Potter and Labbé, 2020; DiGregorio, 2011; Cling *et al.*, 2011; Nguyen, 2007; 2009b). In this way, though these development processes may not predominantly involve direct displacement, there are many other impacts that require exploration.

Potter and Labbé (2020) recognise that phenomenological displacement is occurring but claim that this is not the source of injustice that residents experience—which is often rooted in their complaint that they did not benefit from the profits gained from the sale of their farmland, rather than phenomenological displacement *per sé*. Thus, because they claim that the term gentrification's application hinges on the existence of injustice due to displacement, they argue that gentrification is not a useful word in this context. However, defining something as gentrification does not in itself require that clear forms of injustice are occurring (as Clark noted when Neil Smith asked him to show him the 'battlefields of gentrification' in Malmø; Clark, 2005), rather that (a) there is an influx of capital (b) a demographic shift with (c) a classed character and (d) displacement. Further, we may ask whether the fact that injustice against livelihoods dispossession is not voiced in part due to hegemonic constraints on what counts as legitimate forms of protest—a question which I investigate in Chapters 6 and 7. Indeed, these kinds of 'desirable peri-urban villages' could certainly be said to be experiencing gentrification, as they display several characteristics of the process: upscaling, in-migration by new wealthier residents, and an influx of capital, and different kinds of displacement.[32]

Nevertheless, this debate points to the need to better understand the form that displacement takes in Hanoi—if it takes place at all. The absence of direct displacement, and the relative importance of the informal sector and food spaces for poor residents, suggests that once again a foodways approach can be useful to identify the ways that gentrification interacts with people's material life in Hanoi. What kind

[31] Places of prayer and for conducting votive offerings adjacent to public markets
[32] I discuss these kinds of displacement further in Chapter 5.

of resources and food habits do people build to respond to the loss of agricultural and cultural spaces? And in what way are these activities political? And what, if any, commonalities are there between people's foodways in these gentrifying peri-urban villages in Hanoi, and the research sites in Montreal?

Description of neighbourhoods: Tay Ho and Lihn Dam

For my research, I selected two main case study sites: Tay Ho and Linh Dam. Tay Ho is an up-and-coming peri-urban district increasingly integrated in the urban fabric and becoming a site for many luxury developments. Linh Dam was the first new urban development in Hanoi. Both sites are interesting in their own right but also useful for comparison. First, both sites feature the first new urban areas, and thus enough time has passed to study the interactions between original villagers and the new residents. Further, proximity of these new urban areas and original villages offers a unique laboratory to observe interactions between 'old' and 'new' ways of life. Further, the areas have a mix of sites for food access, including public markets, street vending, supermarkets, farmland, and small-scale gardening.

Another reason that I selected two sites, which were quite different and at opposite ends of the city, was because I felt I lacked the familiarity that I did with Montreal, and that 'testing' my findings in my main case study, Tay Ho, with interviews in another case study, Linh Dam, could greatly inform my understanding of the processes of every day gentrification at play. For example, if people's foodways and responses to gentrification were entirely different in each case, then I might not be able to generalise some of my conclusions. Conversely, if these findings were largely the same, then I could be more confident with making broader claims about gentrification in Hanoi. In this way, on a local level, my research once again followed an approach of 'defamiliarisation' through selecting most-similar, most-different case studies.

Further, though I focused mostly on Tay Ho and Linh Dam, I also did shorter day visits to other new urban areas: Times City, Royal City, EcoPark, Mulberry Lane, and Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính, where I met with local residents, walked around, and read what literature I could find on these spaces (see Figure 6). This was also a continuation of a peripheral approach, where I wanted to get a feel of things while at the same time go deep into material relationships and on-the-ground experiences. In

other words, while I was relatively not as familiar with Hanoi as I was with Montreal, I hoped to gain familiarity of gentrification in Hanoi by exposing myself to different locations.

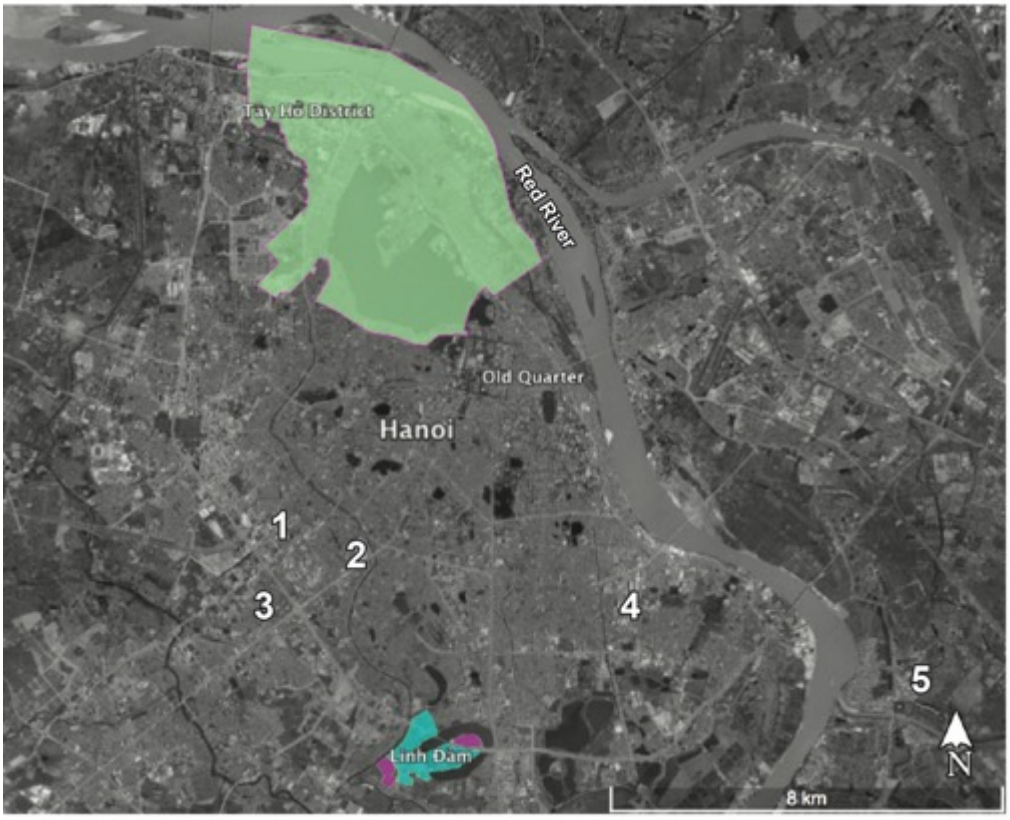


Figure 6 Two primary case study sites in Hanoi: Tay Ho District and Linh Dam

The city faces the red river to the east, and most urbanisation today is expanding to the west. Tay Ho surrounds West Lake, the largest body of water in the city. Day visits included (1) Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính, (2) Royal City, (3) Mulberry Lane, (4) Times City, and (5) EcoPark. See Table 13 for photos of each area. (Google Earth, 2018a)

Tay Ho

The first and main focus of my research in Hanoi was the neighbourhood of Tay Ho. For the past 20 years, it has seen increasing development, both new-build and renovations of existing housing. There is a large influx of new (wealthy and often expat) residents, and due to new supermarkets and organic markets, is seeing significant changes in its food system. It is increasingly seen as the new, dynamic, cultural and artistic quarter where expats and middle-class Vietnamese go out to bars and peruse galleries (Rosen, 2014). At the same time, there continue to be amenities that low-income residents rely on, such as informal markets and subsistence agriculture plots, street food, and formal markets.

Within Tay Ho, which spans the whole surrounding area of West Lake (see Figure 7, below), my research focused on three former ‘villages’ that are now integrated into

the urban fabric: Quang An, Nhat Tan, and Phu Thuong. While Quang An has to a great extent transformed from a farming and fishing village into luxury housing for expats and government officials, Nhat Tan, which is further from the city centre, continues to have a large amount of informal housing and farmland, particularly close to the river. Yet, it is also seeing upscaling, with new-build luxury hotels, townhouses for foreigners, and high-end businesses—especially by the lakefront and along its main arteries. In contrast, Phu Thuong, on the other side of the Nhat Tan Bridge, has much less luxury development. Yet, many of its residents used to be peach tree farmers whose land was expropriated thirty years ago to make way for Vietnam's first gated community constructed by a foreign developer, Ciputra International City, which began construction in 2000. In this way, the three 'villages' are living laboratories of how gentrification progresses through urban space. They have also been affected by recent infrastructure development projects: the construction of the Nhat Tan Bridge connecting Hanoi to the Noi Bai Airport, a new ring road connecting the bridge and circling around the South-West of Hanoi, a waterfront 'Road Around the Lake' (Lac Long Quan) built in 2006, the Ciputra International City. In the future, the three villages may be affected by development projects, such as the planned development of the Red River floodplains into a business and leisure area. As such, the influx of rich residents into the Tay Ho area is also in part driven by state-led upscaling and development.

Useful statistics on Tay Ho (2010)	
Wards	8
Population	139,400
Phu Thoung ward population[33]	18,644
Density	5,806 people / km^2
Households renting to foreigners	2000
Temporary guests per year[34]	20,000

Table 13 Some demographic data on Tay Ho district

This data was drawn from the 2010 Hanoi Statistical Yearbook and student reports on the district. Official demographic data is only available at the district level. Students apparently got access to data that was not available through official channels (see Chapters 3 and 7 for discussion). Sources: Đánh giá ảnh hưởng môi trường của việc thu hồi đất tại quận Tây Hồ, Hà Nội [Evaluation of environmental impacts of land appropriation in Tay Ho, Ha Noi], n.d.; Nguyen, 2016; Hanoi Statistical Office, 2011.

[33] Other ward data is not known
[34] Not clear if this refers to foreigners or rural migrants, or both.

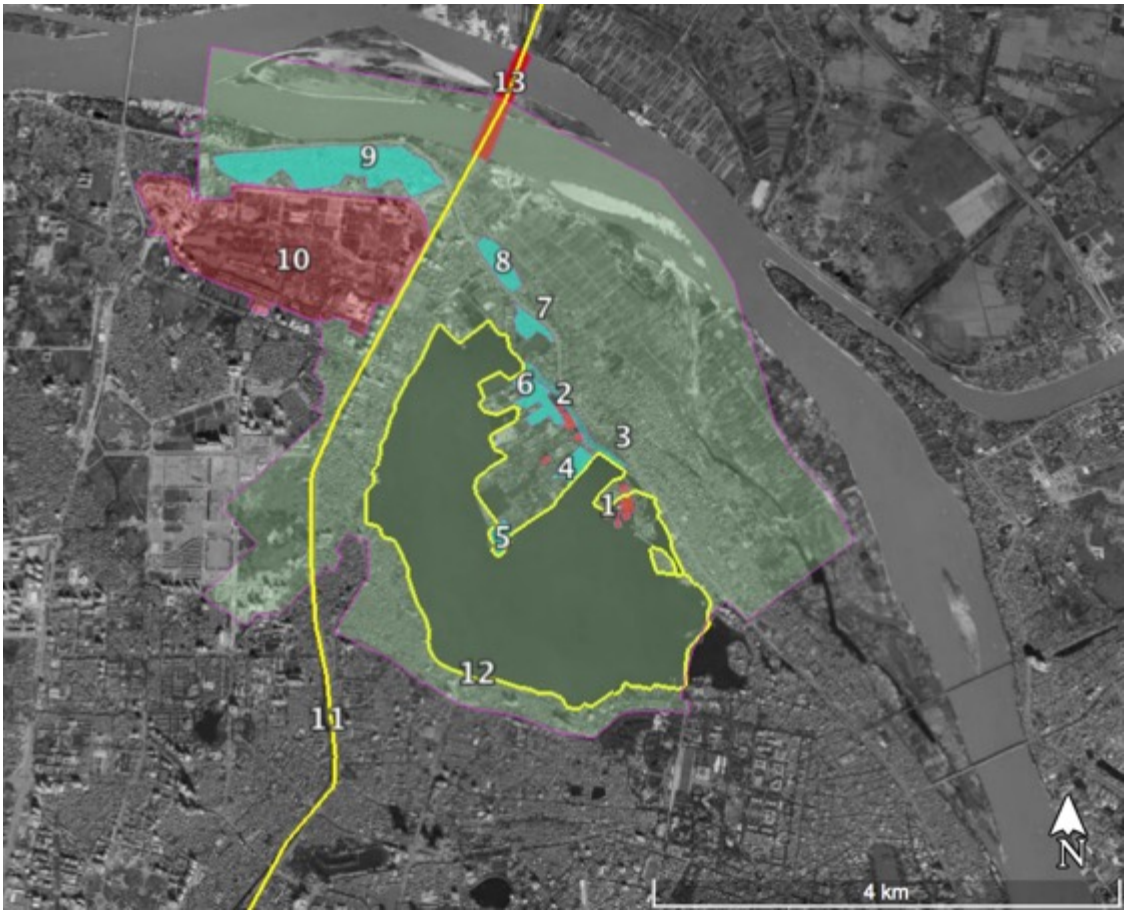


Figure 7 The case study area of Tay Ho district

Numbered and coloured areas (see Table 14) represent relevant sites for research, where RED and YELLOW are new construction and infrastructure, GREEN is the boundaries of Tay Ho district, and CYAN is specific areas (former villages) under study. (Google Earth, 2018b)

1,
2,
3

New-build high-end apartment buildings, constructed 2008-present (1,2), along Xuan Dieu street (3), currently undergoing retail gentrification.

4,
5

The villages of Quang An and nearby Phu Tay Ho (pagoda), which have transformed into residences for expats and wealthy Vietnamese.

6,
7,
8

Two hamlets (6,7) in the village of Nhat Tan, which is currently facing residential upscaling, but not as far advanced as in Quang An. A third (8) hamlet in Nhat Tan has seen less upscaling and is regularly affected by flooding of Red River.

9

The ward of Phu Thuong, where most residents who were farmers have lost their land to the Ciputra development.

10

The Ciputra development which started construction in 2000.

11

The new ring road, completed in 2014.

12		Road around the lake, completed in 2006.
13		Nhat Tan bridge, completed in 2014.

Table 14 Important research sites in Tay Ho

Linh Dam

The second case study site was the new urban area of Linh Dam in Hoang Liet ward, Hoang Mai district (see Figure 8). Linh Dam is located 8km south of Hanoi's centre. The construction of the new urban area in Linh Dam began in 1999—making it one of the first to be built in Hanoi. In 2011, there were an estimated 7,800 new residents (Labbé, 2011).[35] Today there continue to be new projects in the area, but the first phase of construction had been largely finished by 2008. Construction was largely on expropriated farmland. Compensation was equivalent to the produce that would be harvested on the land, as well as support to pursue a new livelihood. Unlike many other new urban areas, Linh Dam was developed by the state-run Housing and

[35] No relevant demographic data was found for Linh Dam specifically, as census data only focuses on the district level.

Development Corporation, and due to low investment and being among the first developments to offer apartments, real estate prices were relatively low and encouraged through low-interest loans. Residents are largely low-to middle-income young professionals and state employees, such as teachers, doctors, or professors. Meanwhile, two-thirds of villagers in the area relied on rice farming to meet basic needs. The other third had diversified their livelihood before expropriation, taking advantage of the village's proximity to Hanoi's Old Quarter (Labbé, 2015). Officials estimate that only 1-2% of villagers have employment in the new urban area (Labbé, 2011).

The district has also seen significant infrastructure development, facilitating the use of these new urban areas. Construction was paired with the concretisation of the banks of Linh Dam lake, turning it into a walking and leisure area. The area is cut through by the construction of a new highway—the main ring-road that connects the rapidly urbanising western Hanoi, southern areas, and the new urban areas to the east on the other side of the Red River, such as the Ecopark township. This situates Linh Dam as a throughway of the developing periphery of the city, potentially increasing its attractiveness for new residents. However, this may also increase concerns around traffic and air pollution, as the highway is usually gridlocked during peak hours.

Figure 8 The case study of Linh Dam in southern Hanoi

Area (1) is the new urban area under investigation, and (2-3) are original villages studied (2: Bằng A; 3: Linh Dam village). (Google Earth, 2018c)

Photo 5 New construction in Linh Dam

Here we can see the concretised lake and the new highway passing through the centre of the new urban area

Photo 6 Linh Dam new urban area at dusk, as viewed from the lake

Conclusion: comparing Montreal and Hanoi

At first glance, Montreal and Hanoi couldn't be more different. Hanoi's informal sector, post-communist regime, history of land reform, and rapid urbanisation contrasts sharply with Montreal's highly formalised economy, liberal capitalist governance, and post-industrial, neoliberal urban growth strategies. Gentrification is occurring in both cities, though under very different contexts. In Montreal, we have 'classic' gentrification, driven today by state-led renewal projects, while in Hanoi, there is a distinctive form of rapid peri-urban gentrification, where former villages are seeing upscaling as they become absorbed into the urban fabric. Thus, while in Hanoi, gentrification is linked to but not the same as the urban expansion process it is experiencing, in Montreal gentrification is happening largely in already-urbanised areas.

In part due to these contexts, the two cities are also interesting from the perspective of understanding the role of material life in gentrification. While Montreal's gentrification has been studied at length, there is no research on the role of low-income people's foodways—how they are affected, and how they play into upscaling—in gentrification. Strong tenants' rights and the presence of social housing mean that many original residents have been able to stay in certain gentrifying neighbourhoods, and therefore they may be affected in ways not as easily visible as direct displacement. In Hanoi, with its extensive informal sector and the expropriation of farmland, paired with the relative absence of direct displacement from residential land, foodways are significant in experiences of gentrification, though there is again little research exploring this question.

These differences offer the opportunity for a most-different, most-similar comparative approach, and a 'defamiliarisation' of the case studies, as the effect of the process on people's foodways in a classic case of gentrification is 'tested' against a more unfamiliar, understudied case. It also offers a comparative case for studying gentrification in a highly urbanised versus a more peri-urban or rural setting, productively comparing, and potentially breaking down, rural and urban dynamics. Thus, comparing how foodways of the urban poor are affected by gentrification in these two different case studies gives insight into the role of material life in gentrification. What comparisons exist across difference gives a stronger case for generalisation more broadly; if material life has a similar role in Montreal as it does in

Hanoi, then we can more confidently conclude that similar dynamics may play out in gentrification processes globally. In the following chapter, I further explore how gentrification has affected people's foodways in both case studies, showing that gentrification also involves a process of 'life displacement' in both cities.

Chapter 5

Gentrification and life displacement in Hanoi and Montreal

> The loss is greater than what you see. Tragedies will not be told to people on the street.
> -Chú Ba, Hanoi resident, talking about changes in Tay Ho (code 8)

When trying to determine whether gentrification has a net positive or negative effect, many researchers focus on direct displacement as the key indicator of the impacts of gentrification (see Slater, 2009 for a summary of this research). Direct displacement is when lower class households are forced to physically move out of an area, due to rising rents, eviction, or other reasons. Some therefore argue that if direct displacement were not occurring, then gentrification would not be a problem. For example, in a recent article in *Quilette*, Coleman Hughes argues that gentrification is actually a *benefit* to poor Black residents, since quantitative research has shown that 'only' one in ten residents are displaced because of gentrification, while it also raised low-income home-owners' property values (Hughes, 2019; citing Brummet and Reed, 2019). Thus, 'the fact that gentrification causes almost no [direct] displacement suggests that cultural change doesn't matter much to those directly affected' (Ibid.).

Putting aside the question of the accuracy of the findings Hughes cites, it does not follow that absence of direct displacement means that other effects of gentrification are not important, or that people do not experience other types of displacement before being physically displaced. As outlined in Chapter 1, gentrification's impacts stretch beyond direct displacement into the realm of cultural, social, and daily life. Researchers have long argued that quantitative measurement of displacement can only tell us so much: studying the impacts of gentrification involves looking at qualitative impacts on people's lives, such as their access to food, level of social isolation, sense of belonging, health, and long-term employment prospects (e.g. Marcuse, 1985; Slater, 2009). These other kinds of impacts have been variously called 'cultural' and 'phenomenological' displacement, fitting under the category of 'indirect' displacement (Marcuse, 1985; Davidson and Lees, 2005; Atkinson, 2015; Wyly *et al.*, 2010).

In the previous chapter, I showed how both Montreal and Hanoi are facing different forms of gentrification that do not necessarily involve direct displacement. In neighbourhoods like Saint-Henri, significant social housing stock has meant that a lot of low-income people have been able to stay in the neighbourhood. In Tay Ho and Linh Dam, urbanisation has involved expropriation from farmland and changing foodways, but, many people in the urban periphery are able to stay in their homes, even as their neighbourhood is becoming more desirable for newcomers to live in. Both cases suggest that beyond direct displacement, understanding the effects of gentrification may benefit from studying how it impacts communities and everyday life—and how they respond to this.

In this chapter, I zoom in on how gentrification transforms people's foodways and how they respond to this transformation. Through telling the narratives of elderly and long-time residents in Montreal and Hanoi, I show how, even if direct displacement were not occurring, we can talk about 'life displacement': where people's social and material basis for reproduction becomes undermined. This is different from phenomenological or cultural displacement as it encapsulates aspects of material, social, and cultural life—which people live through on a continuum, where different aspects are not experienced in isolation from each other. In Montreal, many of the spaces that low-income residents frequented had closed. This, in tandem with increasing pressure on community food provision, led to the disintegration of community and increased isolation. In Hanoi, the unraveling of local ecological relations, livelihoods, culture, and subsistence activity also led to increased breakdown of community ties. In both cases, these changes can catalyse collective and political responses to gentrification. In the following, I explore the changes in Montreal and Hanoi separately. In each case, I begin by sketching the breadth of these changes by telling the life story of a long-time resident. Following this, I break down my findings in each city, outlining how foodways have changed through gentrification, and how this was also the ground for resistance to the process. I summarise the findings by more precisely describing what is meant by life displacement, in contrast to indirect, cultural, or phenomenological displacement.

Gentrification and changing foodways in Montreal

In the following, I narrate some of the stories of how people's foodways changed under gentrification in Montreal, and how they responded through their food habits, in turn. I begin with the story of Agnes, an elderly and low-income resident of Saint-Henri, to illustrate the breadth of changes that gentrification has meant for her. Then, mostly drawing on interviews with long-time elderly residents, but also of owners of businesses and community activists, I outline how food spaces have special importance for people in both neighbourhoods in Montreal, the effects on people's lives when they close or are renovated, what people felt about new food spaces opening in their neighbourhood, and how community food providers were affected by gentrification. I argue that the cumulative effects of these changes were the breakdown of community ties and support networks, which led to isolation and health issues, as well as the progressive sanitisation and commodification of space. I also detail how people responded to these changes, either through individual, household practices, or through collective action.

Life story: Agnes

We met Agnes (code 146) when I was taking photos of the plants on her front balcony, and she came up behind me and glared at me. When we started talking, we learned that she had a lot to say about gentrification. Agnes is in her 70s living on a small pension. She had been displaced twice, each time moving further west for lower rents. Born in 1944 in West Germany, she moved to Montreal to work as an au-pair, and stayed. She was evicted from her long-time home in Little Burgundy, further east, 19 years ago, and has lived in Saint-Henri for 12 years. The first thing she told us was that rents were going really high. This led her to express frustration with her new neighbours, who she called 'chi-chi people', none of whom said hello or hung out on the porch. With her old neighbours, she would share a beer, and sometimes share food on her or their porch. It's mostly young people, but it's not because of the age difference that she didn't interact with them, she doesn't even see them interact with each other, she said. A lot of neighbours left, people she used to know and hang out with.

She also no longer used the alley behind her apartment—there, a condominium developer had brokered a deal with long-time residents running a community garden

in the alleyway, where condo residents could have access to the green alley, even though it was mostly the original residents who maintained it. Agnes used to garden there, but no longer does. She liked to refer to the condo facing the green alley as the 'Berlin Wall', imposing, looking down at her while she gardened there. 'When you're there, it feels like people from the condo are just staring down at you. You feel like you need to pay a ticket to go there.'

Agnes also noted the disappearance of wild spaces. 'A lot of things used to be really wild, no one took care of them, I really liked that.' She used to enjoy walking her dogs and foraging medicinal plants in wild spaces, but no longer did because they had all been developed. She also doesn't go to restaurants, and her ex-boyfriend will often buy groceries for her. She grows a lot of plants on her balcony and in wild spaces, which saves her money and lets her eat vegetables without pesticides.

For Agnes, food spaces were in her direct environment: empty lots, unused industrial spaces, porches, and alleyways. Agnes is just one of the many people we interviewed, but it highlights the way that the effects of gentrification, for many low income residents, expand beyond housing and into the very fabric of neighbourhood life. It is this dynamic that I trace in the remainder of this section, by showing how the closure of food spaces, inaccessibility of new spaces, and changes in community food provision changed the lives of Saint-Henri and NDG residents, and how they responded.

Closure of food spaces

Throughout the research in Montreal, it became clear that the closure of food spaces had a negative effect on people's lives. The replacement of food spaces used by working class residents, with new food spaces—both restaurants and cafés, and grocery stores—and different forms of real estate development leading to the loss of both food and community spaces, as well as increased isolation and social divisions. There were two different dynamics: loss of affordable sources of food, and loss of social spaces for contact and social cohesion, paired with a feeling of exclusion from new food spaces.

In NDG, many interviewees mentioned the Dunkin' Donuts, which was replaced by condos. Mike (code 115), a man of 67, a recipient of senior pension and a user of a

community-organised bus service that picks seniors up to go to the supermarket, told us that he mostly used to go to Dunkin' Donuts, but, now, he just goes to McDonald's in Westmount, which is a half-hour walk further from his home. He liked Dunkin' Donuts, because all his friends were there, but now he only sees them on the street, and he stays at home more often. 'When it closed,' he said, 'I stopped seeing all the people there.' Dan, a director of a community food organisation in NDG, also noted that Dunkin' Donuts had been an important place for seniors:

> Places like Dunkin' Donuts where seniors can sit and spend time and be sort of invisible, Tim Hortons [another coffee chain], there were seniors that would go there every day. It was sold and condos were built. We ended up with a couple of members who came from there. The seniors that come in here don't have the mobility, or most of them don't have transportation, so it's either stay at home or come to somewhere like here. (Code 92)

The effect of food spaces closing was also discussed in our workshop with 12 seniors in NDG (code 104). Here is a small part of that discussion:

> Lucie: Does gentrification affect your food availability?
> 1: We had a big fruits and vegetable store, it was a Sri Lankan store. On Sherbrooke between Wilson and Harbour. They closed down. I was... stunned. I asked them, why are you closing? We just can't afford it anymore. Maybe it was the rent? I was sad to see them go, for sure.
> 2: I think that the people who have cheaper rent are going far for food. And they can't afford a bus pass. So they have less access to food. So you are going to start finding dépanneurs more expensive.
> 3: Seniors on old age security should be given free public transit as they are in many other countries around the world.
> 4: Even in the Cote St-Luc shopping centre, which is not far from me, so many stores have closed. There was a place near IGA [the supermarket] you could sit and have a coffee and a grilled cheese, that closed. One after the other. Now what's good there is the dollar store, IGA, subway, and the SAQ [the liquor store]. That's it. And you know how many times there's people begging inside.
> Aaron: Are there any places that you used to hang out at a lot?
> 7: Churches!
> 5: Dunkin' Donuts, they closed.
> 6: That was a community centre in itself.
> Aaron: Why did it close?
> 5: Condos! Condos!

Photo 7 New condo construction.

This condo building replaced Dunkin' Donuts on rue Sherbrooke in NDG 'When it closed,' said Mike (code 116), 'I stopped seeing all the people there'

Like many other interviewees, these seniors were very aware when different food spaces closed, and became very talkative when we asked them to list these spaces. They regretted that their neighbourhood had changed, and how hard it was to eat out anymore. But for them, food access alone was not the only concern. Their aggravated responses indicated that the closure of food spaces had a special emotional and social impact for them.

One other example in Saint-Henri suggests the importance of these food spaces for the long-term residents. During our research, we often ended up at Miracle Pizza, a cozy diner on rue Notre-Dame, which was, it turned out, not well-known for its pizza, but rather for its affordable lunch menu. At *Miracle*, as people call it, pronounced in French, we would discuss our interviews and chat with the waitress. We would often see the same people at *Miracle*, mostly older men. However, only months after our research period ended, *Miracle* was reported to have burned down (Forster, 2017) and had to close—causes unknown, but cases of fires caused for the purpose of fraudulent insurance claims by the landlord are common in the area and a

known component of gentrification.[36] In western Saint-Henri, where new-build development and commercial gentrification had been less intense, residents told us about two dépanneurs that had closed, both replaced by a condo. Spaces such as the Dunkin' Donuts, *Miracle*, and *depanneurs*, were referenced throughout our interviews as social destinations by working class residents and the elderly. As these places were forced to close, residents increasingly sought spaces further afield, taking the bus to nearby malls or, when they had limited mobility, simply staying home. Along with the renovation of existing spaces and the changes to the community food sector, as discussed below, the cumulative effect was one of increasing isolation and the dissolution of the community that remained.

Photo 8 Café Rose de Lima (now closed)

[36] For a discussion on fires linked to gentrification in Saint-Henri see Twigge-Molecey, 2013: 155-159.

Photo 9 Rocky Montana supermarket (now closed)

Photo 10 Mondiana supermarket (now closed)

Inaccessibility of new and renovated food spaces

Another issue was that even when new food spaces opened, and when old food spaces renovated, they were perceived as being inaccessible by interviewees. In both neighbourhoods, we heard of no commercial food spaces that had opened recently that interviewees felt were primarily marketed toward a low-income clientele. These renovations and changes happened at a small scale, with small grocery stores and restaurants, and also at a larger scale, with upgraded public markets, aimed at new residents and tourists, and renovated and more expensive supermarkets.

Many interviewees remarked that they did not go to the new restaurants, which they saw as either too expensive, or not their kind of place, or both. For example, one elderly woman, Isabelle (code 190), told us that while she thought there were good and bad parts of the recent changes, all the new things were mostly inaccessible to her. She told us about when she was walking on rue Notre-Dame recently, she thought to herself, 'oh wow, there's people here.' For 15 years, the streets were empty. In the 80s, it was a very lively neighbourhood to her, which ended in the 90s, 'Saint-Henri was nothing. There was nothing happening, so many things were closed. And then these newer things started moving in. In the early 2000s, people started having to move out.' While Isabelle could appreciate that the neighbourhood was once again vibrant, she complained that the new businesses did not appeal to her, and that many of her neighbours have had to leave. Similar sentiments were expressed by many interviewees, who remarked that they found the neighbourhood safer, but also admitted that they did not shop or eat at any of the new stores. In addition, while some restaurants tried to ensure cheaper menu items as a way to make it accessible to new residents, there was little interest from most interviewees. For example, one new taco restaurant on rue Notre-Dame had menu items below $5, which the owner hoped made it accessible to lower-income clients. The owner also organised a weekly free soup handout on the sidewalk, which was popular with low-income residents. But even so, people rarely went in to the establishment itself, and few interviewees we talked to were interested in going to the restaurant even if they did have more affordable items. This indicated that price and environment were two separate concerns for low-income residents, where a sense of exclusion was not just based on monetary considerations alone.

Though the closure of food spaces, and the opening of new ones, is often talked about in the context of gentrification (see, e.g., Anguelovski, 2016b), there is little discussion about the importance of *renovation* of existing food spaces for newer clients, and the role this has in changing the food system. In my research, I was surprised to find that many establishments that remain open and were originally oriented towards low-income clients often were renovated and/or change owners. This includes supermarkets, grocery stores, public markets, dépanneurs, restaurants, and bars.

For example, one dépanneur in western Saint-Henri had recently renovated. Aisha, the owner, who also owns the building, told us that she had tried to accommodate the new customers. As she told us,

> Richer people are coming from new condos. But the old residents still come to the business. They especially buy alcohol and cigarettes. We changed the offer and the style, and renovated the interior. We started selling vegetables one month ago, offering more salads and healthy food. A lot of businesses that offer fast food have closed. Newcomers want other kinds of food. Up to five years ago, the neighbourhood wasn't safe. People on social welfare use their income badly. They live on the day-to-day, only buying things for the day. A lot of people come just to pass by, but newcomers from the condo stay to have a meal. People on social welfare, they've been around for twenty years, they become acquainted with us. I can't say I'm against them. My customers are good people, they don't steal. (Code 153).

Aisha noted the contrasts in the clientele, and was clear that she had renovated to attract the newer residents. The interior of the dépanneur now looks much more high-end, with a counter for baked goods, a salad bar, and fresh produce. Business owners such as Aisha, when they had the available capital, would seek to make investments wisely and change their offer to appeal to the changing demographics, who are also able to spend more money. In this way, even though original businesses remain, they become less and less accessible to low-income residents. On the door at the entrance of the dépanneur there was a tag by a locally-known graffiti artist, Listen! It read: 'Did we lose St-Henri?' Someone else had written: 'Yes'.[37]

[37] See Vansintjan, 2020 for an essay on this graffiti artist.

Photo 11 'Did we lose St. Henri?' 'Yes'

Photo reprinted with permission from Kelsey Litwin (Litwin, 2017)

Photo 12 Elsewhere in the neighbourhood, 'We lost Saint Henri'

I noticed another tag by Listen! on a former bank being renovated into a gym and condo called 'Henri'.

Supermarkets and public markets also saw upgrading, which had an impact on the low-income population. One interviewee, Hélène, a community organizer, also pointed out that the supermarket, IGA, had moved from its original location to a newer, larger one, just when the area started gentrifying:

> It was much less expensive, but on the other hand it wasn't good quality. When the neighbourhood began to gentrify, they moved toward the market, they raised their prices enormously. Yes, the IGA looks nicer now but it's less affordable. It's also really far for people. (Code 123)

This kind of renovation and upgrading also happens on a smaller scale. Kim, another dépanneur owner (code 192), had worked in Saint-Henri for 20 years, and had seen the area change, along with her clientele. 'Before there was mostly people on welfare. They buy a lot. Now that they move, now it's people like you. They buy less, but they pay more.' When she started, she got robbed many times. Now, she has changed the kinds of things she sells: less canned food, more imported beers. She knew everyone in the neighbourhood, but, increasingly, she knew people less and less, a lot of her older clients no longer live here. Like Aisha, Kim had changed her supply, but also recognised that the newer residents buy less from the dépanneur, and more often will make the long trip to the supermarket. She thought things were safer, but now, she also knew fewer people. Even when businesses stay, they risk losing their more dependable clientele.

Atwater Market had also recently renovated, which follows patterns around the world of upscaling public markets to attract tourism and investment (Gonzalez, 2017; Gonzalez, 2019). Most low-income people we interviewed did not shop at Atwater Market. Two interviewees, however, a male long-time resident and a disabled resident of a cooperative housing unit (Sid and Michelle, names changed), noted that they did enjoy shopping there but would only go at certain hours when they knew they could get deals, and they would look for specific items. We did not talk to any Saint-Henri resident who shopped there regularly—there was a perception that the market was more for tourism and the new residents. As different interviewees noted 'there are mostly rich people at the market' ('plus des riches à la marché'; code 140), and 'it's more a touristic place than a market', (code 132), and 'it's too expensive now' ('c'est plus cher maintenant'; code 142).

Photo 13 Atwater Market, also recently renovated

The presence of new food spaces and the upgrading of existing food spaces also serve to invisibilize former residents and their foodways. We discussed the phenomenon of upgrading and closing of these kinds of long-time establishments with Hélène, the tenants' rights community organizer in Saint-Henri.

> H: Now the popular[38] bars in St-Henri where people go, there's Chez Mitch, now it's called the Pub Epoxy, but people still call it Chez Mitch.
>
> LL: But it's the same owner?
>
> H: I think so, I don't really know. People say Chez Mitch. Now they do jazz evenings, not everyone goes, but people still do. On Notre-Dame there's the Taverne Notre-Dame, I think people still go there, it's a bit sketchy but it's the last place.
>
> AV: There was Blackjacks?
>
> H: Closed. Blackjacks closed last year, or this year, it's been less than a year. And for restaurants there's Miracle that's still there, it's like an institution [Miracle Pizza has since closed, as I noted], there's Greenspot. Already for people it was difficult to go to restaurants in general. That's why I understand that the restaurants are happy that there are now people who can go there, but it hides the rest. That's what I always dislike in this discussion. Yes, it's true that there are now new businesses with clients, but the people who here before, or poor people arriving here, they exist too. (Code 123)

As Hélène points out, renovations of older establishments often meant a change in clientele, and the benefits touted by developers and politicians of gentrification may

[38] Hélène is using the French word 'populaire' to refer to working-class spaces, as in, 'of the people.'

themselves not be equally distributed, as spaces that incumbent residents used to use become transformed. Her remark also points to the fact that poor people may not always be driven out of the area, but, as our interviews highlighted, they may become less visible and more isolated as the spaces they used to rely on change hands.

Photo 14 Bar de Courcelle (recently renovated).

Bar de Courcelle, like other bars, had been renovated to better appeal to new clients. Interviewees told us that they no longer go as they do not feel at home.

Photo 15 Pub Epoxy (recently renovated)

On the other hand, establishments that had a certain cachet were able to stay open, as they could attract newer residents looking for an 'authentic' experience—reflecting on research findings showing how gentrification relies on rebranding an area as edgy and rough, which itself is a form of chique (e.g. Smith, 2005; Summers, 2015; 2019). To take one example, Greenspot Diner in Saint-Henri had kept largely the same interior design, but was able to profit from their branding as an 'authentic diner' and increased their menu prices. They are now largely a family restaurant, with many of the clients coming after a visit to the renovated Atwater Market. Those who do not have this cachet may eventually be forced to close if they didn't have the capital to invest in renovations. In short, even when businesses don't renovate, they must either be very successful in terms of their branding, or seek to attract a new clientele and raise the prices—thereby potentially making them less accessible to their older patrons. In this way, the transformation of food spaces, and the continued existence of certain establishment is linked to their ability to brand themselves for new clientele and raising their prices. Through this process, gentrification can also be seen as a form of commodification of original, 'working class' or 'ethnic' food spaces—while simultaneously making them inaccessible to the community they originally served, a

dynamic observed in other research on the subject (Alkon & Cadji, 2018; Zukin *et al.*, 2017; Summers, 2015; 2019).

Photo 16 'Le Fameux Restaurant, Cosmo'

Photo is with explicit permission of the subjects. Cosmos Diner in NDG is a well-known Montreal institution, opened in 1967 and now run by the owner's children. When we were there, they were constantly talking to every customer—asking after people's cousins, making jokes. Almost everyone eating there seemed to know each other. The menu is also affordable. Through a certain kind of word-of-mouth and image-building, they have also succeeded in making the diner an 'institution', going so far as calling themselves 'The Famous Cosmo' on Facebook. The coverage and almost cult-like following that they have received, as well as being featured in places like Time Out, has certainly helped (Musgrave, 2012; Karwacki, 2019), as well as being subject of the documentary film Man of Grease (Soiferman, 2000). However, despite the success of their branding, they sold their business in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, their branding may pay off, as the added price for keeping the original name is $50,000.

Photo 17 Greenspot Diner.

Greenspot Diner has barely changed its interior, however, the clientele is visibly much different from what it was a decade ago when I first went there. Today, the diner hosts brunch crowds coming from the market and a significantly marked up menu.

On the whole, while there may be a sense of vibrancy and safety, this is paired with a kind of social segregation where incumbent residents do not feel welcome in new food spaces—which reflects on research that identified forms of 'intimate

segregation' between gentrifiers and gentrified, who live side-by-side but in different worlds (Mumm, 2008). The broader effects of these changes—the closure of existing food spaces, the arrival of new spaces, and renovations of others—were summarised by Hélène:

> Sure, all these places for socialisation, compared to 10 years ago there are more people on the street, on the patios, but who are these people? For me, when I used to walk around in the neighbourhood, everyone said hello to each other, but not now. That doesn't happen any more, there are lots of people who say 'I'm moving because I don't really feel at home any more in St-Henri.' I know lots of people, like in the Co-op where I live, who used to go to the bar de Courcelles but who don't go any more. They don't feel welcome. This happened in Little Burgundy, people have been told at the Burgundy Lion 'Sorry, we're full,' but it was empty. Because they look poor. When you have access to all that it's fun, but when you fear not being able to afford it, when you don't know if you're welcome… And above the bar was a boarding house, and they put everyone out on the street. People with friends who were put out can't go there, for them it's not a place where they're welcome because everyone was kicked out. Yes, it's a place for socialisation but for new arrivals. There isn't mixing. I know exactly who goes there, I live just next door, I know the bar well, and those who've lived here who go there, for example elected officials, people well placed in the district. For sure they're happy now, they have a place to go out in the neighbourhood but… there's a whole part of the population who don't have access.

As Hélène notes, the cumulative effect of these transformations is that many people feel excluded and alienated from spaces that used to be accessible and friendly to them. Hélène's observations also point to the intersection between food consumption and taste, where new spaces may still offer affordable food but are not branded towards low-income clientele, and prefer not to serve them. This dynamic of exclusion was echoed in Amy Twigge-Molecey's research in Saint-Henri, where she observed similar responses by residents. She concludes that the social mix resulting from gentrification was minimal:

> The experience of social mix had resulted in a replacement of 'weak ties' or acquaintances within the neighbourhood, with 'absent ties' or strangers with whom it was impossible to share casual greetings due to a lack of shared culture within the neighbourhood. (Twigge-Molecey, 2013: 196).

In summary, the closure of food spaces, the arrival of new, but inaccessible spaces, and the renovation of existing spaces, points to both a shift to more commodified food spaces that are inaccessible to original residents, and the ultimate erosion of the community and increased isolation of low-income residents. Though defenders of gentrification often claim that gentrification offers the potential for social mix—and therefore upward mobility of low-income residents through contact with new, wealthier residents (see Lees *et al.*, 2008 for an analysis of this argument), this is belied in our interviews. It also connects to research from the US that shows that

gentrification may fragment segregation *geographically*, but, socially, people continue to live in 'intimate segregation' (Mumm, 2008).

Changes to community food provision and service provision

As discussed in Chapter 3, a significant part of the research in Montreal was through participatory observation with civil society organisations. From these experiences, I could further develop a picture of how community food services changed through gentrification. Community food services often specialise in handing out food to those who need it, but they also have a role as a social meeting space. In great part, food services were under increasing pressure from raised rents, but also had a tendency to shift toward emergency provision, responding to their clients' needs, and toward seeking to address isolation that resulted in cheap and accessible food spaces closing. As these organisations are themselves affected by gentrification, the other needs that they meet, such as space for socialisation, also are negatively affected. The result is that, in combination with commercial spaces closing and public spaces becoming sanitised, gentrification led to a further increase in isolation, a degradation of existing community services, and eventual impacts on nutrition and health.

One organisation we worked with at length was the NDG Food Depot (now called The Depot Community Food Centre), whose experience of being forced to move, and changing their services to adjust to a changing foodscape, clearly shows the impact of gentrification on the community sector. In March 2013, a headline in the *Montreal Gazette* read: 'NDG Food Depot forced to move by week's end' (Schwartz, 2013a; 2013b). The Depot, a food bank-turned-community centre, was being evicted from the warehouse they had been in for over 20 years. At short notice, their landlords had decided to sell the building to a condo developer. When I visited the scene, there was a bustle of activity: some volunteers were rushing to load furniture and boxes into trucks, while others were cooking in the kitchen. Staff were trying to work at their desks, while others were trying to take the desks away. The Depot was faced with the difficulty of being kicked out of their home and having to continue providing their services to seniors, single parents, unemployed, and poor people in and around NDG.

Donna, a staff member of the food bank[39] immediately connected their eviction to the changing real estate market: 'The reason that we're leaving our space is pressure because of rising real estate prices due in large part to the new development of the super-hospital' (personal interview, 2013).[40]

[39] Donna's name and position has been made anonymous. However, I decided not to make the Depot anonymous in this case as the information was publicly available.

[40] The McGill University Hospital Centre, one of the largest hospitals in Canada, was being built a few blocks away from the Food Depot, right on the Falaises St. Jacques (St. Jacques cliff) that divide NDG from St-Henri. The 'super-hospital'—the name used by most—looms over St-Henri, overseeing the renovations to the Turcot Interchange, the main highway node connecting Montreal to the rest of Canada. Caught in several corruption scandals and a $1.3 billion price tag, the construction of the hospital took 21 years from inception to completion (Vansintjan and Turcato, 2014; Picard, 2015).

Photo 18 The new MUHC hospital.

The hospital was built on a former rail yard and is nestled between Saint-Henri, Westmount, and NDG, overlooking the Turcot Interchange

As the superhospital was nearing its expected opening in 2015, developers bought up available land in the area. Politicians, seeing this, allowed industrial buildings to be rezoned to residential, and gave a tax break to development projects in the area (Olson, 2011). The Food Depot was one of the victims of this policy. Though the services the Depot provides may be essential for many of NDG's poorer residents, the community group is nevertheless at the mercy of real estate speculation, rezoning, sudden changes in neighbourhood demographics, and the global flow of capital investment. Donna, realising this, tried to make the case for the intrinsic value of community spaces like the Depot, even as she was standing in the mess of its forced eviction:

> Community organisations are essential to the make-up of a neighbourhood. You would not function. We would not be a community. The community is because of, not just the bricks and the roads but it's all the organisations that work to make life better for people who are under-privileged. (Personal interview, 2013).

As Donna describes, community food providers like the NDG Food Depot have an important role in maintaining the community fabric, and yet they, too, are severely affected by gentrification. In both neighbourhoods, civil society was also affected by gentrification, particularly organisations like the NDG Food Depot, which focused on food provision, social isolation, and poverty.

On the whole, many community food groups were under pressure due to real estate changes, as they were often housed in commercial spaces with weak tenant protections and then evicted by landlords. As I described above, the NDG Food Depot, who were evicted from their 23-year-location, moved to a church basement—the church was sold to developers after two years, and they subsequently moved to western NDG at the end of my field research period. À Pois Chiche, a community cafeteria, had been forced to close many years previously. Head & Hands, a community group that supports youth, as well, had started to feel pressure and took pre-emptive action to change their location to western NDG—which has felt fewer effects of gentrification. Though these areas have a larger low-income population who are quite isolated due to poor public transport access, moving to western NDG also has the secondary effect, however, of making these organisations less accessible to remaining low-income populations in eastern NDG, who are more affected by gentrification. POPIR, the tenants' rights advocacy group in Saint-Henri which also

advocated for increased food spaces for residents, was forced to move from their long-time location on Rue Notre-Dame, a year and a half after my field research period (McKenna, 2019). As the real estate environment becomes more competitive, these groups struggle to find adequate locations to keep operating, and, lacking support from local governments, they move to less ideal locations or, as in the case of À Pois Chiche, close their operations altogether. Further, they become limited in their capacity to respond to the needs that arise due to gentrification, as they become more focused on food provision, which requires a lot of labour to maintain, and as they can't find more space for these services due to high rents, their options become increasingly narrower.

Photo 19 The former location of the NDG Food Depot, now condominiums

Photo 20 Another former location of the NDG Food Depot.

Staff at food banks also argued that increases in rent have had a significant effect on their participants, where renters are forced to choose between paying rent and paying for food. This was further underlined in our interview with Hélène in Saint-Henri:

> When you're poor it's rent and food, those are the two big expenses. The more expensive the rent, the less we can feed ourselves well. We hear a lot from the food banks now, who see people who have jobs but still go to the food bank. People who go from time to time to the food bank, you see them more and more often. That's why with all these questions of food security in the Tables du Quartier that takes more and more space. Fighting poverty, before we talked a lot about housing, and things like addiction, school dropout rates, I'm not saying they're not still important but access to food has really become a main problem in terms of the fight against poverty. That's why they do a lot of, almost all the neighbourhoods have mini markets, a collective grocery store, because if we don't do it, if community groups don't develop food offerings that aren't expensive, people will just eat really badly. (Code 123)

As rent goes up, low-income residents are forced to cut down on their food expenses, rent is on the whole non-negotiable and for most a large proportion of their expenses. In NDG, 40% of renter households dedicate over 30% of their income to rent, and in Saint-Henri, this number is 33% of renter households (Centraide, 2019a; 2019b). This is also reflected in the Depot's annual reports: in 2016, 67% of food

basket recipients at the Depot spent over half their monthly income on rent, 24% spent over 80% of their income on rent (NDG Food Depot, 2016). Hélène's remarks and the Depot's annual reports on their users underline how food access and gentrification are interconnected, and reflect the central role that civil society has in managing this issue.

Community food spaces such as the Depot exist at the intersection of gentrification, food insecurity, poverty, and loneliness. One thing that stood out from our volunteer work at the NDG Food Depot was the level of isolation experienced by participants. People came to the Depot as a last resort, and many of these people were very lonely and isolated. This in turn leads to increased health risks (e.g. access to a support network of people who can take you to the hospital or call a doctor, risk of depression and anxiety leading to further health issues, poor nutrition due to eating alone, etc.). For example, one question on the survey[41] we used asked whether, in case of emergency, the respondent could contact anyone, friends or family, for help—a standard measurement of loneliness in sociology (Russel *et al.*, 1978). For many people, there was no one. Many relied on the Depot for most of their food, as well as their social time. Many of the interviewees used both the Depot's services and volunteered there. Though there was no question in the survey about how the neighbourhood had changed, many also voiced concerns about this without any prompting from us. In particular, they complained about food spaces that had closed, and expressed worry about rising rents. Through this, it was clear that workers at organisations like the NDG Food Depot often have front-line knowledge of how people respond to gentrification—though, with their limited time and resources, they may not have the capacity to respond adequately beyond offering food and opportunity for socialisation.

As a result of this, community food spaces find themselves in a double bind. On the one hand, increasing rents that are leading people to cut their food expenditures and rely on food banks for survival. Community organisations expand their services and dedicate more resources to supplying food and space to break isolation. On the other hand, especially as they rely on commercially zoned or non-residentially zoned spaces like churches (which do not have rent control in Montreal), they also face

[41] As noted in Chapter 3, we supported the NDG Food Depot in collecting responses on their annual survey. However, these survey results could not be used in our study, but we were given permission to discuss our experiences of conducting the surveys more broadly.

pressure to survive themselves, and many are forced to close because of unsustainable rents or due to the buying up of large properties by developers like churches and warehouses. These connected drivers negatively affect community organisations' ability to fulfil their diverse roles as providers of last resort and, ultimately, compound food insecurity and poor nutrition amongst low-income residents.

Responses to changed foodways

To summarise the above, in Montreal, the interconnected patterns of increase in residential and commercial rents, the closing and upscaling of food spaces, the increased instability of the community sector, and the sanitisation of public space all lead to increased isolation, the breakdown of community networks, and, ultimately, impact health and well being for low income, long-term residents (see Figure 10). Yet, this is only half of the picture as it just depicts the pain of the gentrified. Throughout the research we also found many examples of how people—individuals, households, groups of people, and community organisations—respond to these changes in creative and subtle ways. On a household level, people collaborated to reduce food costs and to socialise with their neighbours. In turn, the community sector shifted towards more food programs, programs that aimed to address isolation, and strategic pressure and collaboration to address their lack of power. In the following, I describe these responses more broadly (see Table 15 for a summary), which I then return to in Chapter 6 through more detailed narratives and profiles of interviewees—highlighting how they become a space for the articulation of different values.

Changes in food habits

At the household level, people responded to gentrification in great part by changing their food habits. As I described above, as rent went up, many residents described the difficult choice of cutting down on food expenses or leaving their home. But, beyond attending food banks, we found that residents responded in other ways, such as shopping at the beginning of the month when they received their social assistance checks. Supermarkets in Montreal will lower the quality of their specials at the beginning of the month, meaning that 'Social assistance recipients navigate

through a "foodscape" that cycles between "food oasis" and "food mirage" within a single month' (Roussy, 2014). Even when people's wallets are affected by gentrification and despite the loneliness that often results, people continued to rely on community and connections—at least those who have not been displaced. At home, many low-income residents also gardened. Many used their balcony to grow vegetables, and some, like Agnes, described foraging for wild plants in overgrown empty lots. Especially in senior residences, interviewees talked about cooking together with friends, sharing food expenses, and sharing cab rides and transportation expenses when doing food shopping. Senior residents are outfitted with a community cooking space, which many took advantage of. Many interviewees would very actively talk about deals they heard about, passed around fliers for the stores and collected coupons, and seemed to have encyclopaedic knowledge about which deals can often be found in which supermarket, which they shared with each other while hanging out in communal spaces.

Interviewees also expressed newly found frustration around transportation. Restaurants, supermarkets, and the mall were far, and many had limited mobility. Some would borrow cars from family and go grocery shopping with friends. Others took the bus, and the taxi when they could. In general, people would try to make it work in any way they could, while still being able to shop. Gentrification made this more difficult as the places they relied on closed, and conversely, as the neighbourhood emptied of acquaintances, people also would find it more difficult to share transportation costs. Isolation affects people in practical ways that further limits their ability to respond to gentrification.

Civil society responses

For their part, civil society groups were often pushed towards starting to offer food along with their other services. To list a few examples, the Welcome Hall Mission, which originally mainly ran a homeless shelter in Downtown Montreal, moved to their location in Saint-Henri, given to them by the wealthy Molson family as a donation in 2006, and began a large, charity-style food bank operation (personal interview of staff). Head & Hands, an organisation in NDG that provides services mainly for youth, began a food pantry that stocked food for people in their programs

(personal interview of staff). However, as they explained, this grew too quickly for the infrastructure that they had, and wasn't financially sustainable. They also began a community kitchen program for young parents, where participants cook together and take leftovers home. After feeling pressure to move from their location on Sherbrooke—out of fear that their landlord wanted to sell the building, they finally secured a permanent location in Western NDG, where they made sure to dedicate space for a garden project. Community organisations not initially dealing with food were structurally pushed toward providing food-oriented programming, as explained by Dan, the director of another civil society organisation in NDG :

> [The organisation] was a place of socialisation for seniors. Over the years, it became more and more important that the seniors needed more than socialising with each other, food became very very important. Seniors have said that cooking for themselves is not pleasurable. [We] tried to fill that niche, and that's where we are right now [...]. Within the community, the community has changed dramatically. As the city changed, boarding houses were closed up, condos were being built, and people were being pushed more to the West End. (Code 92)

Dan connected the changes in their own programming with the changes in the area, where they have started to see some of the same people who he used to serve when he worked downtown, who have since moved further west. For this organisation, food was a central way to address these issues and fulfil their mandate as a service to bring seniors together.

Beyond these more strategic changes in programming by the community sector, there were also more direct efforts to respond to gentrification through intervention into the foodscape. In Saint-Henri collective responses by civil society organisations often had food as a strong central focus. Efforts were led by POPIR, a member-based tenants' rights organisation. Working with Solidarité Saint-Henri, the *table de quartier*[42] (coordination platform for community groups) of the neighbourhood, POPIR led several initiatives against gentrification. Key initiatives included: protests against specific development projects, lobbying local government for more social housing; lobbying local government to limit new restaurants opening on rue Notre-Dame; organising protests to turn the derelict Canada Malting factory into social

[42] *Tables de concertation des quartiers* (neighbourhood action platforms) in large part started as local political action committees and neighbourhood assemblies that united various local actors (citizen initiatives, service organisations, and institutions) to coordinate strategies in response to the issues identified by neighbourhood residents. Beginning in the 1980s, *Tables de concertation* became formally incorporated into Montreal's urban governance model as state-funded organisations which oversaw and coordinated the wide diversity of community initiatives in each neighbourhood (Hamel, 1995; Shragge, 2003).

housing, a garden, a low-cost grocery store, and a community centre; and pressuring local government to turn a former library into a community-oriented cafeteria and social space. These campaigns had varying levels of success: the regulations on new restaurants are in place, the Canada Malting and former library campaigns are still in progress, and certain development projects were reassessed or stopped. Solidarité Saint-Henri managed several projects that they saw as helping to address the negative effects of gentrification, including organising a fresh vegetable stand in dépanneurs across Saint-Henri, and several larger vegetable stands in different senior homes and parks. Together, these projects represented a concerted effort by relatively militant (i.e., actively political) civil society organisations to address gentrification's negative effects.

Efforts were in large part initiated after a series of community consultations, where it was determined by residents that there was a need for more accessible community spaces from low-income residents who remained in the neighbourhood. In Little Burgundy, a neighbouring historically working class neighbourhood with a large Black and South Indian population, organisations had set up a 'community fridge', a public fridge where anyone could leave food for others. Community activists had also started a new low-cost cafeteria in Little Burgundy. Organizers saw these as primarily a response to gentrification and loss of spaces for low-income residents to gather. Thus these civil society groups recognised that gentrification affected people beyond their housing, and saw that community space was crucial for the continued support of low-income groups in the neighbourhood, as the spaces they frequent and rely on progressively began to close. Indeed, it is clear that these groups centred material life, spaces of social reproduction, and foodways in their analysis of how to combat, and ameliorate the effects of, gentrification.

Photo 21 Poster for a protest action in Saint-Henri

Photo 22 Protest 'À nous le malting'

Artwork for a community vision of the Canada Malting factory: 'my garden', 'a meeting place for everyone', 'my neighbourhood is not for sale'

In NDG, collective responses by civil society were less militant—they largely did not involve protest campaigns or a strong contingent of activists—and less often framed as a response to gentrification, but were similarly focused around food. As discussed above, there was a tendency for civil society organisations to shift toward offering food, starting a food pantry, or organising community gardens.

NDG also had a rather coordinated civil society network. In response to the NDG Food Depot losing their location, the Community Council hosted a 'food coalition' and a 'space coalition' whose main tasks were to coordinate food-related initiatives, and to find stable spaces for these initiatives. Strong civil society bonds enabled quick mobilisation in cases of crisis, and the NDG Food Depot quickly found a church basement, and, after two years there, found a more permanent space in western NDG. This coordinated civil society network also became mobilised in the case of the Benny Farm development project, also mentioned in chapter 4, where the community, in large part coordinated by the Community Council, pressured the borough to turn a plan for privatised housing redevelopment into social and affordable housing, as well as community spaces (Serge, 2013). The case of Benny Farm, in fact, was one important exception to NDG seeming lack of militancy compared to Saint-Henri. Nevertheless, the tight-knit connections in the community sector, with many of the staff at different community groups knowing each other personally very well, has led to an ability to respond to crisis and to coordinate political strategies, albeit in a largely non-confrontational way.

Summary

While Saint-Henri and NDG have different histories and demographics, gentrification is affecting the food spaces, habits, and strategies of low-income residents in both—in turn transforming material life and engendering new values. The result of these material life changes is two-fold: first, increased isolation and breakdown of community fabric, resulting in negative impacts on wellbeing and health; second, people respond through individual and collective changes in their foodscapes and foodways. While households shared food purchasing and travel costs, and took up public spaces to socialise, the community sector responded by expanding the availability of decommodified food and spaces to break isolation, aside from their organising for social housing, tenants rights, and limits on commercial gentrification.

In this way, foodways and material life are profoundly linked; the way gentrification affects food access also has ramifications on the community fabric as a whole.

Some of this may be attributed to changes in shopping habits, food systems, and the social problem of loneliness. However, my findings show that gentrification compounded these problems (see Table 15 and Figure 9). First, as food spaces begin to close due to increases in commercial rent gaps and newer businesses moving in that don't cater to them, people become more isolated. Second, changes in the kinds of residents mean that people no longer are able to use their environment informally—e.g. through sharing food and drinks with their neighbours. Third, as rents increased, households were forced to cut down on food expenses and rely on food donations—thereby leading civil society groups to increasingly shift their services toward food provision, in some cases being able to spend less energy on a focus on housing or poverty. Fourth, as people sought to respond to these changes through individual strategies like sharing transport and cooking collectively, the potential to do so became increasingly limited due to the increased dissolution of community ties. Fifth, higher rent gaps also meant increased risk for civil society groups oriented toward food provision, in turn negatively affecting the community's response to gentrification. Sixth, as many residents complained about a difference in the wildness, or the accessibility of land itself, in the area, as well as the demographic changes that came with gentrification, residents also had less access to informal food spaces such as collective gardens, foraging, and sharing food and drinks in public space.

As I show in Figure 12, dynamics can be divided into primary (increases in rents, demographic changes, etc.) secondary effects (e.g. closure of community food spaces due to increased rents), and external drivers (e.g. broader changes in food system, see Chapter 4). In this way, residential gentrification, commercial gentrification, and access to public space exist along a continuum in people's lives, and though housing affordability determines whether they can stay in the neighbourhood, they may still be affected by other forms of displacement, such as dissolution of community and less ability to rely on food spaces for social connection and to cut down on food expenses. In short, existing problems like changes in food systems and increased isolation are compounded through gentrification, which then in turn affects all aspects of life.

Yet, it is also at the level of foodways that households and collectivities respond to the effects of gentrification, leading to political action. It is here that value conflicts

are embroiled within material life. The changing character of the neighbourhood was in large part felt through the changing food spaces, which were felt to be exclusionary and meant for new residents and tourists. While many interviewees valued the increased safety, they nevertheless felt alienation from the new businesses and no longer felt at home. Political action, in response, aimed to reclaim certain symbolic spaces—a factory, a former library—for community use, and to transform into a food space. Community sector interventions also involved creating more food spaces where people felt welcome, such as fresh vegetable stalls and socially welcoming lunch service. Thus, the changes in foodways were felt as a change in values, which in turn catalyzed political action. I further investigate the relationship between material life and values in Chapter 6.

A few notes on how these findings fit with existing literature on gentrification in the Global North. As noted in Chapter 1, there is so far little research on the foodways of low-income residents in gentrifying areas, even in Western countries. My findings show that foodways are an integral part of how low-income people respond to gentrification, as well as how they are affected. These findings align with what we know so far and fill some gaps. First, researchers, especially in ecological gentrification literature, have identified connections between gentrification and the uneven distribution of environmental goods and bads, and, specifically, the transformation of food spaces to cater to higher-income residents, leading to a sense of loss and alienation by long-term residents (Anguelovski, 2013; 2016a; 2016b; Anguelovski *et al.* 2018b; Alkon & Cadji, 2018; Alkon *et al.*, 2019). The findings highlighted above add depth to this discussion, showing how this may occur both in more conspicuous ways (upgrading of a public market) but also through the piecemeal renovation of grocery stores, diners, and bars. This also is in line with extensive research that tracks the rise of loneliness and alienation in Western society, closely connected to the steady disappearance of 'third spaces' of where people can gather and maintain connections (Oldenburg, 1991). We could consider gentrification as compounding this dynamic for working class people. Further, the findings also highlight how rent affects civil society and community food provision more specifically, further putting pressure on the low-income population. But this also has to be contextualised within the individual or household strategies that low-income residents take, which include collective strategies such as sharing transportation and

food costs, or taking up public space. In this way, it further underlines the connection between a sense of belonging, material changes to people's lives, individual strategies, and community-level responses and impacts, and how these are all connected in a meshwork and are cumulatively impacted through gentrification (e.g. compare to Anguelovski, 2013; 2014). In this way, it also further supports the research on the impact of gentrification on working class and racialised communities, and how these impacts are varied across different spheres of life (Bélanger, Forthcoming; Mumm, 2008; Kirkland, 2008; Brand, 2014; Pennay, 2014; Stabrowski, 2014; Parekh, 2015; Paton, 2016; Prince, 2016). While my research did not focus on the role of systemic racism in gentrification—in part due to long-term low income residents being of primarily white ethnicity in Saint Henri, and in part because it was beyond the scope of the research question—it does show that, here too, gentrification leads to forms of 'intimate segregation' where different groups live side-by-side, but worlds apart (Mumm, 2008).

In terms of political strategies to respond to gentrification, the findings highlight the necessary role that commercial spaces have in maintaining a sense of place for low-income residents. Commercial rent control measures, zoning freezes, and taxation on empty commercial buildings may all decrease the pressure on businesses aiming to serve low income residents. Further, the findings highlight the small household strategies to respond to gentrification, and suggest that there could be more attention paid to these strategies and measures put in place to support their actualisation, such as free or subsidised public transport or car-sharing, making kitchens available for collective cooking, at-cost food sources such as cafetarias, decriminalisation of public spaces—allowing people to use public space to make connections, and decriminalisation of small-scale means of generating income (e.g. street vending). Such diverse measures could compliment more traditional means to address housing insecurity such as social or cooperative housing, rent control, etc., with the benefit of addressing multiple spheres of life beyond housing alone.

Changes in food system
• Fewer empty lots to garden on • Fewer grocery stores and butchers, replacement by dépanneurs (cornerstores) • Closure of stores along main commercial roads, closure or up-scaling of diners, dépanneurs, and bars • As rent goes up, residents are forced to cut down food expenses • New supermarkets • New restaurants, galleries, and bars • Closure of cafés • Renovation and upscaling of market • Food market stalls organised by civil society groups • Closure of accessible food options • Eviction of and pressure on community food groups
Household strategies in response to changes
Shopping and household
• Those receiving benefits would often shop at the beginning of the month to take advantage of specials and the benefits received then • Get to know vendors at the market to get cheap deals at the end of the day • Avoid new restaurants • Continue to go to old restaurants where they knew they would see acquaintances • After closure of a Dunkin' Donuts, residents went to McDonalds' and the mall in different neighbourhoods. • As rent goes up residents sought to cut food expenses with different strategies • Use of unregulated space for gardening • Take advantage of balcony to grow vegetables in containers and pots
Culture
• Residents grew traditional vegetables in their gardens to share with family and neighbours • Celebrate ethnic background through yearly festivals, where old friends and family who had moved would meet each other
Mutual aid
• Buy collectively and cook together, often supported by civil society groups • Share cars and taxis to split transportation costs to supermarkets or budget restaurants • In senior residences, seniors took advantage of communal space and cooked and ate together, and share promotional fliers with bonuses and coupons at supermarkets, and recipes and cooking tips • Gift-giving of gardened produce and homemade crafts, often given to family, neighbours, friends, or the researchers themselves
Community sector strategies in response to changes
• Campaign for tenant rights, welfare, housing, and against social service cuts • Campaign for decommodified food spaces such as low-cost cafetarias • Shift services toward offering food and space for socialisation

Table 15 Changes in food system in Montreal and responding household strategies

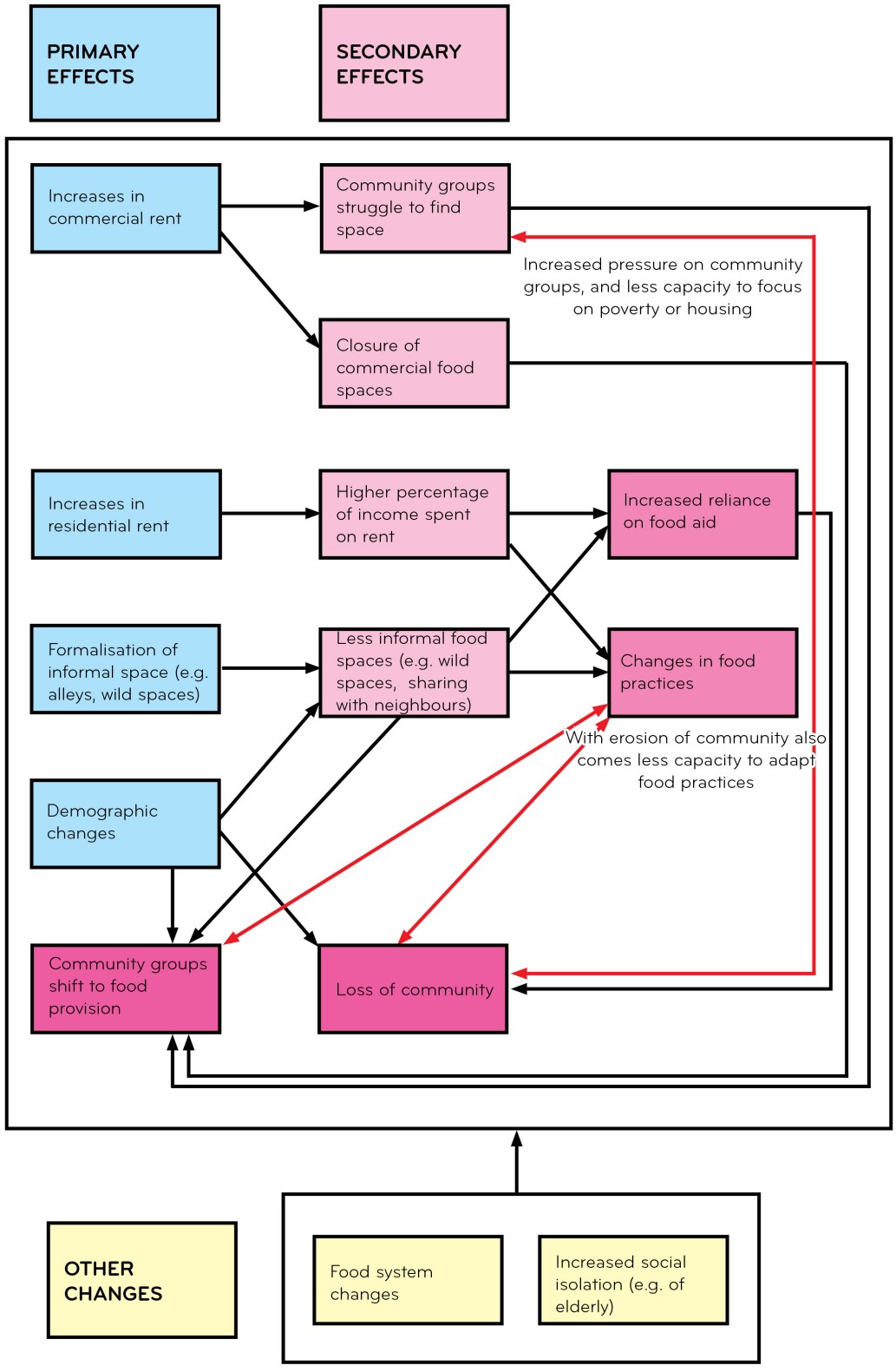


Figure 9 Effect of gentrification on foodways in Montreal. Image by the author.

'Primary effects' are immediate effects such as increases in commercial rent. 'Secondary effects' are in great part a result of these primary effects. 'Other changes' are independent from gentrification, but further compound these dynamics, such as centralisation of food system and decrease in amount of small grocery stores, and increase in social isolation in Western society.

Gentrification and changing foodways in Hanoi

In Hanoi, like in Montreal, gentrification has involved the breakdown of community ties—but, uniquely, low-income residents pointed to the divisions and bitterness experienced by the community as the neighbourhood became a destination for the elite, the loss of livelihood, breaking of bonds of kinship, ecological degradation, and the loss of cultural spaces. Here, gentrification was clearly an issue of environmental and land justice, involving the degradation of a once-abundant and fertile urban ecology. In response, low-income residents sought out new livelihoods and means of subsistence, such as vending homemade food, informal use of public space, engaging with new businesses, and mobilising with their neighbours against what they saw as unfair treatment and insufficient reimbursement for the loss of their farmland and means of subsistence. In the following, I start once again with a story about an elderly resident whose experience touches on many of these themes. Then, I discuss each theme at greater length, before concluding this chapter by defining 'life displacement', linking these findings once again to the literature on gentrification.

Life story: bác Tinh

We met bác Tinh (code 6) in a drained bed of a lake[43], as she was tending to her vegetables. She told us she did not plant vegetables for herself, but to give to her family and neighbours as gifts. After talking to her a bit, we found out she was a peach farmer, and that she was looking for some extra hands to help her pluck the leaves of her peach trees, in time for them to blossom by Têt. Van asked her if she might want our help for two days, so we could listen to her stories, and learn about the history of Nhat Tan village. She agreed. And so, for three mornings, we helped her with plucking her peach trees while listening to her stories.

[43] This narrative reflection is a modified version of a text co-written with Nguyen Hong Van, a short narrative piece presented at our public event in Hanoi, March 2017. I distinguish Van's reflections from my own by noting the parts she wrote in particular.

Photo 23 Growing vegetables in the lake bed

Bác Tinh is a farmer in a city. Like many elderly residents we met, she calls her neighbourhood a village, and continues to think of herself as a villager. In her lifetime, she had had many occupations: fishing, growing vegetables, fruit trees, peach trees, making rice noodles, making bread (from rations), selling ice cream, selling roses, growing ornamental flowers, growing corn, growing mulberry trees, and

breeding silk worms. Even now, she grew pumpkins, squash, and different vegetables between her peach trees, as well as many more vegetables in her own garden and by the drained lake. Though she owned a home in Tay Ho, she was not as well off as others, who had had the capital available to build rental apartments for foreigners. To pass the time, she gardened vegetables in the empty lakebed by her house and between the peach trees by the riverside which, she said, she did mostly because her neighbours had gifted her home-grown vegetables last year, and she felt she had to return the favour. The cemetery, the lake, her peach orchard, her backyard—these were all food spaces, each imbued with meaning, ritual, relationships, and memory. She experienced gentrification through the way that it transformed the land around her into a concretised, ecologically bereft environment, and disrupted her relationship to it.

Bác Tinh's relationship to the land was illustrative of how gentrification in Hanoi came along with the breakdown of community ties, loss of livelihood, and loss of foodways and cultural spaces—the focus of this next section.

Elite upscaling

In the following, I describe the upscaling of Tay Ho, showing how the influx of new, wealthier residents had changed the community. I focus on Tay Ho here in particular as I had much more data available on its development in the last 40 years, coming both from interviews of elderly residents and the literature.

When we asked residents of Tay Ho about the changes they had seen, they often began by contrasting Tay Ho's modest past to its current high status, amazed at its meteoric rise. Chú Phương, a developer, outlined the story of Tay Ho's early upscaling:

> When I went to secondary school, most friends living in Tay Ho were dirt poor. They were typical suburban peasants. During the war, they were very poor suburban peasants ... When the foreigners[44] came, they appreciated the environmental quality of the area, and they started to reside there. In the 1980s, well-connected people started making purchases, and the price started going up. (Code 43)

[44] People we talked to distinguished 'migrants' and 'foreigners' or 'expats', where migrants were seen as Vietnamese rural-urban migrants, often poor and relying on temporary employment and lodging, while foreigners and expats referred to wealthy immigrants from outside of Vietnam—mostly Europeans, Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Koreans.

Other interviewees told us that some wealthier individuals started setting up second homes in the area as a 'summer cottage' to live outside of the city. Many incumbent residents (or 'villagers', as they called themselves) were also government workers and bureaucrats, low in the hierarchy but with good connections. In the early 1990s, foreigners started renting in the area—in part facilitated by the government connections of certain residents, who could more easily access the permits needed to rent to foreigners. According to our interviewees, land prices started going up rapidly even before the Land Law formalised the buying and selling of land in 1993. Certain residents used the capital and connections they had to either build houses to rent out to foreigners, or sold farmland to be developed into luxury housing. Most that could, however, even those with little capital, would try to hold on to their residential land, knowing that it had increasingly high value. Some rented out their house close to the lake, while building a new house on their farmland closer to the river and out of the desirable area, so that they could capture the higher rents from foreigners and wealthy Vietnamese closer to the lake.

This period was described by several interviewees as a moment of transformation—often with humour and a sense of shock. As chú Phương, the developer, said, '[In the 1970s], if you had a motorcycle, you could buy a house. I can list some very close friends of mine, they lived a modest life, but later they became millionaires.... Tay Ho became a status symbol in front of my eyes' (code 43). A Tay Ho resident, em Đoàn, who had grown up in the area but had not been able to take advantage of the increase in land value, noted that 'some of my uncles have ten houses to rent to foreigners. When they wake up, they have $5,000 per day' (code 29). Another resident, Bà Đào remarked, with a sense of wonder, 'It used to be that land was everywhere and you could ask your neighbour for a piece of it. But then it became *tấc dất tấc vàng*. Now you couldn't dream of asking your neighbour for land' (code 23). This contrast between abundance of land in the past and scarcity of land in the present was a recurring theme in our interviews.

This rapid transformation also had an effect on people's relationships and community. Some claimed that the area had changed significantly and no longer was like a village, and others claimed that it was precisely the village-like atmosphere that separated it from the city. For example,

> Now everyone has big gates and big walls. It used to be that you could just shout over someone's fence but now no one talks to each other anymore. Mostly you talk to your family, your relatives. But you mind your own business. It was much more fun before than it is now. (code 23).

> The first thing we like about living here is we are familiar with one another ... We like to stick together here. For example, we might be here and there but we greet each other always, but like you [people in the city] you might see each other but don't say a word. (code 74)

This reification of country-city divisions, just as rural areas like Tay Ho are being absorbed into the urban fabric, was an important dynamic throughout our study, where village life was both derided as being backwards, and celebrated as more community-oriented.

Furthermore, multiple respondents also noted the dissolution of community that came with the changed demographics and the increasing real estate values. Because land ownership was tied to heredity, and often passed down patrilineally, there was often conflict about who received land within the family, and how much land was given—leading to further dissolution of community ties, but also affecting rural the environment as well. As chú Ba (code 8) whose family was from Tay Ho and whose aunt still lives there remarked,

> It was a family tragedy because of the land. When real estate value increases, it's the first sign of urbanisation. But then all the community structures are affected and messed up. They all become very messed up. All the trees were taken down. Houses started having concrete gates. Each house became its own ward. It was not a community anymore... The loss is greater than what you see. Tragedies will not be told to people on the street. (Chú Ba, code 8)

The increased privatisation that came with the influx of new, wealthier residents, was one of the factors that led to a change in the community life. Multiple interviewees mentioned the ever higher walls and gates, a symbol of the alienation in the community. The bitterness within families and between neighbours, caused by differing abilities to capitalise on rising real estate values, led to broken kinship bonds, as in the case of chú Ba's family, whose father became estranged from chú Ba's aunt, who held the title to the land. This ultimately affected people's material life, as is further explored below.

Expropriation of farmland, infringement on cultural spaces, and new businesses

In both Tay Ho and Linh Dam, farmland had been expropriated through both large-scale and small-scale development projects. There was also a kind of endogenous gentrification, led by residents who had access to some capital, while those with less capital and connections were excluded from the real estate market. Together, these dynamics led to a significant transformation of people's food system. This transformation of livelihoods and wealth was also paired with the arrival of new businesses, which catered to the new residents and were largely not used by low-income, long-term residents.

In both Tay Ho and Linh Dam, many long-term residents had been farmers, and some still were. Urban development meant that many had to find new ways to make a living. Some were expropriated from their farmland by the government, others were bought out by private developers. Usually, expropriation by the state required some remuneration. However, this was often far below market price. Many resisted expropriation through protests (further discussed below and in Chapters 6 and 7), often demanding higher remuneration. Yet, expropriation of farmland often did not affect housing, as farmland allotted to families usually surrounded villages, and households still kept their housing in the village itself.

Photo 24 New-build housing next to West Lake.

This process greatly affected the local food system because, even though farmers grew and harvested cash crops, they would also tend to grow vegetables and keep livestock on their fields for household consumption. While most people familiar with Tay Ho today know the area for its peach farms, it was clear from our interviews that, even up to 20 years ago, residents farmed a wide diversity of crops, such as corn, rice, other fruit trees, lotus, and many more. This diverse use of the land helped people to pursue different strategies for survival. It is this diverse use of the land that, as I will show, becomes affected by gentrification.

One way that gentrification affected people's subsistence and survival strategies was in the increased pressure on farmers to grow high-value crops. Using land for farming increasingly had to compete with the housing rental market, both for foreigners and, in less desirable areas such as the Red River floodplain, migrant workers. Thus, high rents on farmland led farmers to choose more high-value crops, such as kumquat and peach. In fact, though the area was famous for its peach trees, farmers noted that they had only taken up this tradition in the 1980s, when land value started increasing. Yet, as we learned from our days helping bác Tinh and

interviewing multiple farmers in the area, as well as several experts on peri-urban agriculture, farming peach and kumquat trees for ceremonial purposes required high and dry soil. For this reason, peach trees used to be farmed further inland, by West Lake or in the area that is now the Ciputra International City, while vegetables for home consumption were farmed in the floodplains of the Red River. Due to expropriation of the areas by Ciputra and around West Lake, farmers had to move their peach trees—their highest-value crop—to the Red River floodplains. We noticed that bác Tinh herself grew some squash between her peach trees, but her neighbours did not. Because peach tree cultivation required high pesticide use, most farmers no longer grew vegetables for home consumption by the Red River floodplains or between the peach trees. Thus, food autonomy and health were closely intertwined for many interviewees. Indeed, interviewees noted that since they lost their farmland, or since they had had to move their farmland to other areas, they no longer grew vegetables and had to buy their own food (code 4, 23, 29). Those that did grow their own vegetables preferred to find other sites for growing vegetables such as in abandoned plots or drained lake beds—as further discussed below. To summarise, the increased pressure on real estate led farmers to change the kind of crops they grew, but also discouraged subsistence farming and further impacted people's autonomy over their own food choices, resulting in increased health risks such as exposure to pesticides and pollution.

Photo 25 Peach trees for sale.

Young men are selling flowering peach trees during Têt (Chinese New Year) near West Lake, in former peach farmland, now under construction for a new urban area

Photo 26 Growing peach trees in the floodplains by the Red River

Another way that the increase in real estate value of the area affected farmers was that some poor farmers were forced to sell their land in the village and then build a house on what used to be their farmland, which further limited the ability of residents to grow subsistence food. After an interview with one resident, bà Kiệm (code 25), an elderly woman who we met while she was gardening, Van talked about the effect that moving to different land had had on people:

> She said that they moved to 'land for vegetables' [đất rau xanh]. Those who have to sell their land because they get in debt, they have to move to 'land for vegetables'. It's actually fascinating the way they perceive land. There's land for vegetables, land for peach, land for corn, land for rice, land by the riverbank. She seems to think that it's a very degrading thing to do to have to move and live on land that is used for growing vegetables, instead of in the village.

Though many farmers had been able to shift their production to higher-value crops—in a sense making agricultural production itself gentrified—expropriation of large plots of land for high-end development projects by the lake and on their formerly dry land had meant that they could no longer support a wide diversity of production, including farming for personal consumption. In addition, that some farmers sold their home in high-value sites and built a new residence on their

farmland was also seen as degrading. These cumulative changes affected food access, especially that of poorer farmers, who now had to shop for their food—an activity that they saw as limiting their autonomy (see Chapter 6).

There was also a change in food businesses, which, from interviews, were most used by new residents and rarely used by long-term residents. In both Tay Ho and Linh Dam, there were many new convenience stores and some supermarkets. From our interviews, we learned that these had begun to open around 2010, along with an increase in supermarkets and convenience stores and the influx of new residents to the new urban areas and high-end luxury apartments. In Tay Ho especially, there were new restaurants primarily directed at foreigners. While many had a familiarity with Western foods, most low-income residents we interviewed did not often shop at supermarkets or convenience stores or eat out in chain or 'Westernised' restaurants—and when they did, only as a special occasion, for example, to bring their children to for a party. However, we did talk to some long-term residents and vendors who had started to sell produce directly to new high-end restaurants (code 15, 23). Nonetheless, it was very clear that new businesses were primarily targeted at new, wealthy residents, and the long-term residents we talked to had little interest in making use of them.

Another observable dynamic was that gentrification was impacting cultural and spiritual spaces through decreasing access, expropriation, and touristification. Communal and traditional spaces like temples and cemeteries were important to residents, and a significant part of the food culture. Residents living near pagodas took advantage of increased interest in religion and prayer in Vietnamese society since the end of the subsidy era and would set up stalls to sell food and offerings. In Quang An village, whose temple has become a popular site for touristic visits, the local villagers have oriented much of their economy toward meeting the peak demand during festivals such as Vietnamese New Year, but, the village economy comes to a stand-still in other periods.

In several instances in Tay Ho, development projects had threatened cultural spaces. Cemeteries, temples, and shrines are traditionally in fields or just outside the village boundary—and are places to give food offerings to ancestors or share meals. Cemeteries are traditionally found in farmland close to the village; villagers will often visit the cemetery while working in the fields. Due to development projects,

cemeteries had been destroyed, moved, or cut off from the village through a new large road—causing villagers to have much more difficulty in accessing their ancestors' graves (as further described in Chapter 6). This was seen as a threat to village life and village traditions by many of the residents we interviewed.

Another issue was that, with the rush for capturing real estate value, interviewees remarked culturally important spaces were often encroached upon in a piecemeal, furtive fashion. For example, shrines or graves in the fields, usually protected under government law, might be 'discovered' during development projects, but their discovery was hidden and they were subsequently demolished (code 3, 7, 53). In villages, people would expand their houses piece by piece, encroaching on common spaces like ponds, squares, shrines, cemeteries, and temples. Temples are often sites for village festivals, and ponds are important spaces for leisure and subsistence and commercial food production (e.g. water spinach, lotus, fish, snails). In a context where an inch of land is an inch of gold, each inch of real estate was captured, enabled by institutional gray zones around common space—which were most often food spaces. For example, it was estimated by one expert in urban land use change that the surface area of West Lake—an important source of food for many locals—had shrunk by one third due largely to informal encroachment by wealthy residents living on the waterfront—the primary impetus of building the road around the lake (code 53, see also Chapter 7). Thus a dynamic of informal and clandestine rent-seeking led to the slow interference of common spaces, both cultural and for subsistence.

Ecological degradation

Gentrification also meant a shift from a rural, abundant, and diverse ecosystem to a concretised, sparse and regulated urban space. Concerns over pollution, loss of biodiversity, loss of food sources, and decrease in natural beauty were dominant themes in interviews. Food spaces were affected by pollution and ecosystem degradation—which is not just a result of urban development but also due to unequal access to environmental amenities that are one aspect of development.

For example, West Lake had been a major source of fish for local residents but there had been a mass fish death a month before my field research began. In Linh Dam as well, the concretisation of the lake and the increase in effluent going into it had caused mass asphyxiation of the fish population during our field research period—leading many to stop fishing in the lake. This was likely caused by too much nitrogen in the water, partly due to decreased permeability of the lake and its recent concretisation, and partly due to the increase in high-end development that used the lake as a sewage outlet (code 1; code 52). As one highly placed district official in Tay Ho told us:

> We build a lot more new villas and new houses. When we built the road around the lake we had to build a water treatment plant. It is currently in pilot phase. Before the road around the lake was built the fish there was used for food, because then the lake was able to self-cleanse. In one ward there are around 800 families who rent to foreigners, which really affects the lake. This is another side of development. (Code 1).

The degradation of the lake biome could easily be interpreted as a result of increased population density, which many people we interviewed claimed was the cause (an apolitical ecological hypothesis), but this official, and other experts, linked the changes to the increased pressure from high-end development and the poor waste treatment that resulted from it (a political ecological hypothesis).

In much of Hanoi, fishing is a major past-time for men, as well as a site for socialisation and maintaining friendships. While we were talking to one fisher in Tay Ho, a long-term resident for many generations and currently a security guard, several acquaintances stopped by, chatted, joked around, caught up on the news, and bought fish—'enough to buy a beer', as the man told us. The degradation of the lake environment is only one, more visible, aspect of the change in the food system following the development and upscaling of these areas. Many we talked to, especially women, mourned the disappearing of vegetable plots, ponds to swim in, frogs, fruit trees, trees that served as landmarks, traditional crops like lotus, and snails.

This transformation from a rural, highly ecologically vibrant area to concretised, ecologically stifling urban space can be encapsulated in the story of anh Danh, who had grown up in Tay Ho and expressed wonder at its sheer natural abundance, now lost. Van recounts our conversation:

> When he grew up there were a lot of fruit trees everywhere and some people had vegetable patches, but almost everyone had a pond in their garden. People would keep vegetables, but only for their own use. A lot of people fished from the lake, and sold those, and fished snails from the lake, and sold those.
>
> His father would catch frogs when it rained, and he would have to eat them. He said, 'There were so many you could be eating them for many years. You would never run out of frogs.' When he was in high school, 20 years ago, then people stopped fishing in the lake. He then mentioned the fish deaths that happened this year. (Code 9).

When hearing this, I was reminded of Richard Lee's famous account of a hunter-gatherer Khoisan man, who, when asked why he doesn't farm, said, 'Why should we plant, when there are so many mongomongo nuts in the world?' (Lee, 1968; cited in Sahlins, 1998). Anh Danh's account should be contextualised in the years of hardship and famine which he grew up in, following the collapse of the communist rationing system and distribution of agricultural production, when eating frogs may have been a last resort. Nevertheless, his account reflects a kind of abundance that was a product of a vibrant socio-ecological system in Hanoi's peri-urban areas. The land rush in Hanoi, which transformed organic wealth into a site for real estate profits—and, in the case of Tay Ho, a place to display status and wealth—has affected people's ability to capture the fecundity of the land, a product of centuries-long human-ecosystem interactions (King, 1911). These stories were shocking to me because, as a foreigner, I experienced Hanoi's urban environment as diverse, green, and lush—but hearing these stories about the abundance of these areas in the recent past helped me to realise that I was only seeing a snapshot of a long process of urbanisation, which greatly transformed, squeezed out, and compromised every aspect of the urban ecosystem, people's daily lives, and their livelihoods.

Photo 27 Growing vegetables on the bank of the lake

Villagers commonly grew vegetables on the bank of the lake prior to the construction of the road around the lake and the lake's concretisation. Now, vegetable-growing was often informal and in small nooks and crevices, such as in the spaces between cinderblocks lining the lake. However, these cinderblocks prevented water circulation and filtration by plants, leading to oxygenation of the lake water, in turn causing die-off among fish and other species, such as snails and frogs.

Responses to changed foodways

In Hanoi, the influx of capital into neighbourhoods like Tay Ho and Linh Dam had led to changes in how people were able to use their land, resulting in the breaking of kinship bonds, loss of traditional life, ecological degradation, and disrupted livelihoods. Once again, however, focusing on these 'pain narratives' alone would only be half of the story, as these dynamics also led many people to respond strategically, and many of these responses were also grounded in material life. In the following, I describe how street vending, informal use of space, taking over common spaces, food safety strategies, and mobilisation were all strategies responding to gentrification.

Use of common areas for gardening

In response to the deterioration of the means for subsistence agriculture, following the expropriation of farmland, many used common, public, and unused space for growing vegetables and gardening.[45] Many of those we met who gardened vegetables were previously farmers and had started to garden in common spaces once they no longer had access to their own plots to garden.[46] This was frequent amongst older residents who had lived in the local village for a long time. Some sold the produce they grew, however, most used it for household consumption or would gift it to neighbours, family, and friends. Residents used plastic or styrofoam boxes on the sidewalk or on rooftops, as well as in the beds of drained lakes, banks of lakes and ponds, empty plots of land, cemeteries, or construction sites. Some residents also had gardens next to their house, however, this was rare: due to rising land value, most had either built up whatever land they had title to or subdivided and sold it. Those who gardened next to their house were either wealthy because they could afford the luxury of having a garden on their land, or poor, because they had not had the capital to build extra rented housing on their own land. Many people we met tried to garden, but where they could garden depended on their access to land. This conflict between wanting to garden but not having the space or time to do so was conveyed to us during a meeting with nine farmers in Phu Thuong, whose land was being expropriated for the Ciputra development (code 74; see Chapter 6 for further details of this conversation):

> Van: Do you grow vegetables?
> 4: Yes, how else can we get vegetables to eat.
> 1: Those who have available land in the garden grow vegetables there, those who don't grow on foam boxes upstairs.
> Van: Do you yourself grow them in the garden or …?
> 4: I grow them in the garden. I also grow herbs and seasoning vegetables in foam boxes.
> Van: Do you grow vegetables, Ms. Chi?
> 2: No, I don't, I only do farming outside. Only those who have a large garden can do it.
> Van: For those of you who don't grow vegetables at the moment, did you do it before?
> 2,3: Yes.
> Van: That you no longer do it now is because you no longer have land?

[45] The term 'public space' and divisions between private and public do not translate easily from Western to Vietnamese contexts. For the Vietnamese government, 'unused' space is a term referring to empty lots, undeveloped, and unzoned land. However, many people do use this land for various purposes such as informal trade, gardening, and waste collection—even if it is not formally recognised for these purposes. Here, I use the term common space to refer to spaces that are neither for exclusively private (e.g. housing) or public (e.g. roads, parks) use.

[46] We also met migrants who took over unused land; this was a way for them to interact with the older residents and villagers. However, this was also rare. The majority of people who gardened on unused land within the village borders were long-time residents.

3: Those who still have land can grow vegetables, those who are tight on land cannot.
Van: Are there still people who grow vegetables for sale?
9: Yes, plenty of them.
Van: But those of you here are not interested in growing vegetables for sale, are you?
1: Growing vegetables takes a lot of work, watering and such.
9: Just growing a little for our own consumption.
3: Growing vegetables for sale is very tiring, growing a little for your own use is ok but growing a lot of them is too tiring.

In Linh Dam there were some similar patterns. Long-time residents and former farmers had a dedicated communal plot that they used to grow vegetables, but they also took advantage of small spaces within the village. One difference was that in many new urban areas, residents had built more permanent planter boxes, which did not need to be moved, while in the urbanised villages of Tay Ho and Linh Dam, these were often in Styrofoam boxes, mobile. When we asked two long-term residents why they were mobile, we were told that this was done so that they could be moved when authorities came (code 31).

In Linh Dam, new residents often used public space for eating and growing food. While land use rights were clearly defined in new urban areas, a culture of informality persists, allowing residents to take over unused space wherever possible. Most residents are young families who bring their parents from the country to take care of their children. These senior residents have to adjust to the new environment and develop new social connections. We talked to several elderly who used empty construction sites to grow vegetables, and many also used public space for leisure activities such as exercise, sports, or walking. Vegetables were most often shared between neighbours on the same floor of the apartment building or in the same complex. Residents of these apartment buildings knew each other by name and in many cases by phone number. They often traded home-prepared foods and sometimes even sold food to each other. Many interactions between neighbours involved gift-giving and sharing of information about recipes or gardening methods. These allowed new residents to make friends in the new built environment, which improved the community feeling of the area.

Photo 28 Home-making in the new urban area.

Informal vegetable gardens in a new urban area near Mulberry Lane. These gardens helped new residents get to know each other in the new environment, and were often used by grandparents who stayed home to take care of children while the young parents worked. Gift-giving of vegetables between residents was common.

Photo 29 Home-making in a new urban area.

Informal vegetable gardens on a site slated for construction in the Linh Dam new urban area. Growing vegetables was one response to the need for new residents to build community and interact with the land in the new surroundings.

Photo 30 Container gardening in low-income areas.

In low-income areas, people used Styrofoam containers. Vegetable gardening was one way for people to continue to make connections and engage in public life, as well as maintain subsistence agriculture lost when farmland was expropriated. Interviewees told us they were mobile so they could be moved when authorities came.

Photo 31 Container gardening in a high-income new urban area.

Here, more robust, immobile containers contrasted to the styrofoam boxes in the low-income area. While gardening was practised by both low-income and high-income residents, its criminalisation differed across class divides, where high-income residents were able to formalise gardening practices, while low-income residents had to find more subversive tactics.

Vending

Another response to the loss of farmland by many residents was increased vending in public spaces. Some made extra income by selling fermented vegetables, others sold tea, fruits, grilled corn, or other consumables. Several people we talked to turned the ground floor of their house into a shop, which allowed them to offer small groceries while engaging with street life and passers by.

In Tay Ho, certain streets had become street markets, where different residents used the front of their house to sell food, and eventually others would also come to use the sidewalk and street space to sell their wares. These were often popular with those living nearby as you could drive through them with a scooter, stop by the vendor without getting off, and drive off easily. Many chose to do vending outside their house as a way to have something to do now that they had lost their main source of income or leisure activity. In this way, vending became a way for many of those who no longer could garden to participate in public life (see Chapter 6 for more on this).

Like in Tay Ho, informal and formal street markets in Linh Dam were very social spaces, and were used by both older and new residents of the new urban area. The new residents we talked to preferred to go to the market to get their groceries, instead of the supermarket and convenience stores in the new urban area. Police and security often patrolled the new urban area, limiting the possibility for informal street vending. However, the long-term residents we talked to who had shifted to street vending for income reported that many of their clients were new residents. In this way, the markets and vending became a key way for new and old residents to interact, even though many of the long-term villagers saw themselves as separate from the new urban residents living in the new urban area.

Daily food practices had adjusted along with recent changes in the food system and urban environment. Many showed concern over safe food, especially the issue of pesticides and chemical fertilisers. To address this, low-income interviewees we talked to practiced washing their vegetables in large water baths to remove the pesticides and pathogens, others shopped only from vendors they knew and whose produce they trusted. Two students, Trần Xuân Đảm and Nguyễn Thị Hậu, also noticed that local residents would cover their home-grown vegetables with mesh to

protect them from pollution from production (see Photo 32). They connected it to urban development in the area:

> After losing their farmland, in order to maintain their traditional work farmers moved their peach trees to the Red River plain—which used to be land for vegetables. This leads to a loss of vegetable land. Some families bought Styrofoam containers and started growing vegetables in their houses. Other families, like Mr. Ho, are more fortunate because they can grow vegetables in small yards in their properties.
>
> As peach trees are now grown in large quantity near residential areas, a large amount of pesticide is used to keep them healthy. This in turn creates impacts on vegetable gardens. Black nets like the one captured in this photo are used, not only to provide shade from the sun and protect the plants from insects, but also as an impromptu, DIY solution to reduce the impact of pesticides on their food source. Therefore, a black net is a symbol of the impacts that urbanisation has on Nhat Tan people's food source. (Trần Xuân Đảm and Nguyễn Thị Hậu, presentation during Qualitative Methods Workshop, collected and translated by Van)

Many had family connections in rural areas and took advantage of these to access food from producers they could trust. People also had adjusted their shopping practices, either using their motorcycle to pick up produce from a (cheaper) street market instead on the way home from work, or arriving at the end of the day to get cheaper deals from vendors. Migrant workers in particular would cook together and share food expenses amongst their flatmates, and rely on family connections back in the country for food sources. In contrast, wealthier interviewees had access to organic stores, but also organised shared food deliveries from online retailers, as well as finding reliable sources from family connections.

Photo 32 Mesh covering vegetables in Tay Ho

This mesh is used to protect vegetables from pollution in an effort to have safe vegetables. Đảm and Hậu, two students from the qualitative research workshop, noticed the mesh and took this photo, noting how it represented the changes in foodways in the area. Photo by Trần Xuân Đảm and Nguyễn Thị Hậu.

Responses to protect cultural practices

While cultural spaces were often faced with either expropriation or touristification, leading many interviewees to express concern about the loss of tradition and village culture, there was also a resurgence of traditional gatherings. Village leaders had started, in the last thirty years, to organise very large yearly festivals, which included parades and feasts at local temples, to celebrate their own village. In Tay Ho, the village festival was an occasion for those who had left the village to meet old acquaintances, but also for neighbours who had grown increasingly distant to engage with each other. In this sense, village festivals became a way to reify village life, now that the 'village' had been almost entirely integrated into the urban fabric and villagers no longer had shared experiences.

Culture was also often mobilised in response to development in other ways. On multiple occasions, we were asked to share traditional foods and beverages, prepared by our hosts (such as locally grown teas). When interviewees offered us these items, they would explain their traditional use in the village, remarking that they are no longer grown here but used to be, or, proudly noting that they were grown in their own garden plot (code 6, 25, 29). When we asked residents if they ever cook large meals together and shared them amongst each other beyond their immediate household (e.g. collective cooking, community kitchen events to reduce food-making costs), most said that they did not, except in the case of large celebrations like weddings, and cultural or village festivals. Sharing food thus most often took on a cultural, social, and celebratory aspect.

It was in the protection of these cemeteries that some of the greater resistance against development projects emerged. Resistance to displacement often takes the form of direct protests, occupation of land, banners and posters placed on sites of conflict, and less visible back-channel maneouevering through the local party cadre. These strategies are limited, however, as they must remain within the 'permissible' forms of resistance (e.g. not critical of the party) and can often lead to violent repression by the state. As Danielle Labbé has observed (2011; 2013), when protests

do occur in the face of development, protesters' concerns are often voiced in relation to the importance of cultural sites like temples and cemeteries—relatively safe topics which garner sympathy from officials and the rest of society. Thus this may be more strategic as villagers can claim the loss of tradition and identity as a way to appeal to the public, but, it also speaks to the process of phenomenological or 'life' displacement, where spaces closely tied to a community's identity are often contested under gentrification, and become a key locus for struggle.

In Phu Thuong, for example, we met chị Chình (code 28), a farmer in her mid-forties who farmed full-time—her family was VND 200 million in debt ($8,600). Though she had received compensation for her farmland being taken, she now rented other villagers' farmland to use. She told us about the protests against the cemetery being moved to a smaller plot. 'The cemetery is part of the [Ciputra] project. But compensation is not enough for moving the graves'. Her hamlet, which has a large population of Catholic residents, a minority in Vietnam, had put in a request for a new cemetery elsewhere, but the ward had rejected it. As a result, other farmers—she said that she herself could not, as she did not have the financial security to protest—continued to occupy their land in resistance to development projects, as a way to protect nearby cemeteries. Again, cemeteries were a point of conflict and resistance in the expropriation of land, as they were important in representing a community's collective identity, which had existed on a continuum between land, culture, and material life.

Photo 33 The Catholic cemetery.

This cemetery was in a former agricultural area slated for development, with Phu Thuong village in the background. There is a conflict between villagers and the authorities over compensation for the demolition of the cemetery.

Summary

Gentrification in Hanoi has led to transformation in people's foodways—but these effects differ across class and location. Understanding these differences helps to highlight the role that foodways and material life has for people during gentrification (see Figure 10). In all areas, all kinds of people, poor and wealthier, took over common spaces in large part to build or maintain connections with their neighbours, and changed their food habits through their concern for food safety. This included gardening in common spaces, informal vending (both in the apartment buildings and on the street), and growing their own vegetables and processing them as well as using their connections to access trustworthy food from the countryside. In original villages that have seen gentrification, residents were faced with the disruption of material life—through the degradation of ecological systems, an end to subsistence farming, and being forced to change livelihoods, and the perturbation of local culture as newcomers move into the area and households become more isolated from each other. As a result, long-time residents relied on the continuation and renewal of cultural

traditions—often through village festivals, celebrations of local food culture, and offerings to ancestors. Many low-income residents also began to do street vending, either in front of their home or further in the city. Poor residents also practiced food habits to diminish the risk of toxicity and pesticides, such as cleaning vegetables thoroughly and covering their gardens to protect them from construction dust. In new urban areas, and for high-income residents, there was a predominant focus on using food for building connections in their new residence, as well as using organic supermarkets, social media, and personal connections to access safe food.

Though these patterns are partly attributable to urbanisation and changes in the food system more generally, they are also a direct result of gentrification. In the case of new urban areas, these food practices are a result of the need to build new connections and address gaps in the food system through forming connections and starting informal food businesses. In original villages facing gentrification, people were responding directly to their farmland being expropriated for development projects, causing many to no longer be able to rely on subsistence agriculture as their main source of food. As well, the construction of luxury housing was identified as the main cause of the degradation of ecosystems and the inability to depend on these ecosystems for subsistence. As farmers had to shift livelihoods, many turned to vending to make a living. Even those who had done relatively well from gentrification, with property values going up and the ability to rent to foreigners, there was still disappointment with the inability to continue past food practices and be self-reliant in terms of food production.

The findings on foodways in Hanoi are also in line with research on urbanisation in the Global South, as well as existing research on the impacts of gentrification on the gentrified. Literature on urbanisation in the Global South, and especially South East Asia, stresses the role that rurality and rural-urban interfaces play in the process of urban expansion, where peri-urban spaces are often far more decentralised and clustered around village-like settlements and infrastructural development, belying the highly centralised model of urban expansion coming from Western contexts (McGee, 1991; 2009). Suburbanisation is also deemed an important feature of urbanisation in the Global South today (Guney *et al.*, 2019). My own findings show that the process of gentrification of peri-urban villages in Hanoi features similar characteristics and must be understood as part of a highly conflictual process whereby rurality, suburbs,

and the urban interface, marked by struggles over livelihoods, tradition, and ecological systems. As I explore further in Chapter 6, the findings also dovetail with literature on 'weapons of the weak' and informal economies, which stresses the role that public space and 'everyday resistance' plays in the political activity of subalterns (Scott, 1985). In relation to the literature on gentrification, as with the Montreal case study, the findings highlight that gentrification can be understood as an environmental justice conflict as well, which involves an uneven distribution of ecological goods and bads throughout gentrification (Anguelovski, 2013; Anguelovski & Alier, 2014). However, the case study of Hanoi strengthens this insight, noting that issues of culture and informality were especially prominent in this Global South context, while similarities between case studies include the use of public space, changing ecological relations, and disruption of community life.

It is clear that gentrification in Hanoi involves an intense disruption of livelihood and subsistence. Addressing these issues on a policy level could involve meeting farmers' demands, such as sufficient remuneration for expropriated farmland, as well as preserving common and traditional spaces used by villagers for the benefit of maintaining the possibility for subsistence activities. In addition, providing resources, such as sanitation, hygienic services, and infrastructure for informal workers may further support the disruption of people's source of income and facilitate shifts to different means of employment. Ensuring ecologically appropriate infrastructure, such as sustainable development of water bodies, limiting pollution and pesticides, and limiting the use of motorised vehicles may also address many interviewees' concerns about contamination and ecological degradation. Formalising cultural spaces and protecting them adequately may also be a necessary way of ameliorating the deterioration of community life. These are just some examples of ways to address the findings in this case study, which don't include other indirect policies such as limiting speculation on housing, addressing corruption between real estate and local officials, and building infrastructures (e.g. public transport) that makes integration with the urban core accessible for low-income residents.

Changes in food system
• Reduction in environmental amenities (ponds, fruit trees, species diversity) • New supermarkets and convenience stores • New restaurants directed at foreigners • Pollution affecting grown vegetables • Significant food safety concerns • Increased import and export of products • Subdivision of land due to real estate pressure, leading to loss of access to fresh produce • Increased internal migration, leading to migrants taking advantage of informal connections between country and city
Household strategies in response to changes
Shopping
• Lower costs by buying food at the end of the day at the market • Make relationships with food vendors • Collective purchasing from trusted buyers and family • Using motorcycle for quick purchases instead of walking, calling vendors with cell phone for deliveries • Residents of new urban areas cook meals to advertise and sell to others in Facebook groups of the buildings and use family connections to sell 'safe food' to neighbours and colleagues. • Mostly avoid new businesses
Household
• As gardens are subdivided and sold, residents grow vegetables in between cash crop or take over unregulated space. • Wash and rinse vegetables to avoid pesticides • Housefront vending • Use of unregulated space for gardening
Culture
• Celebrate traditional foods at home • Collective cooking for celebrations and within the household and kinship groups.
Mutual aid
• Migrant workers cook together and share purchasing expenses • Rely on family connections for food sources • Gift-giving of gardened produce and homemade crafts, often given to family, neighbours, friends, or the researchers themselves. • Rumor-mongering and chit-chat at street markets and amongst neighbours

Table 16 Changes in food system in Hanoi, and responding household strategies

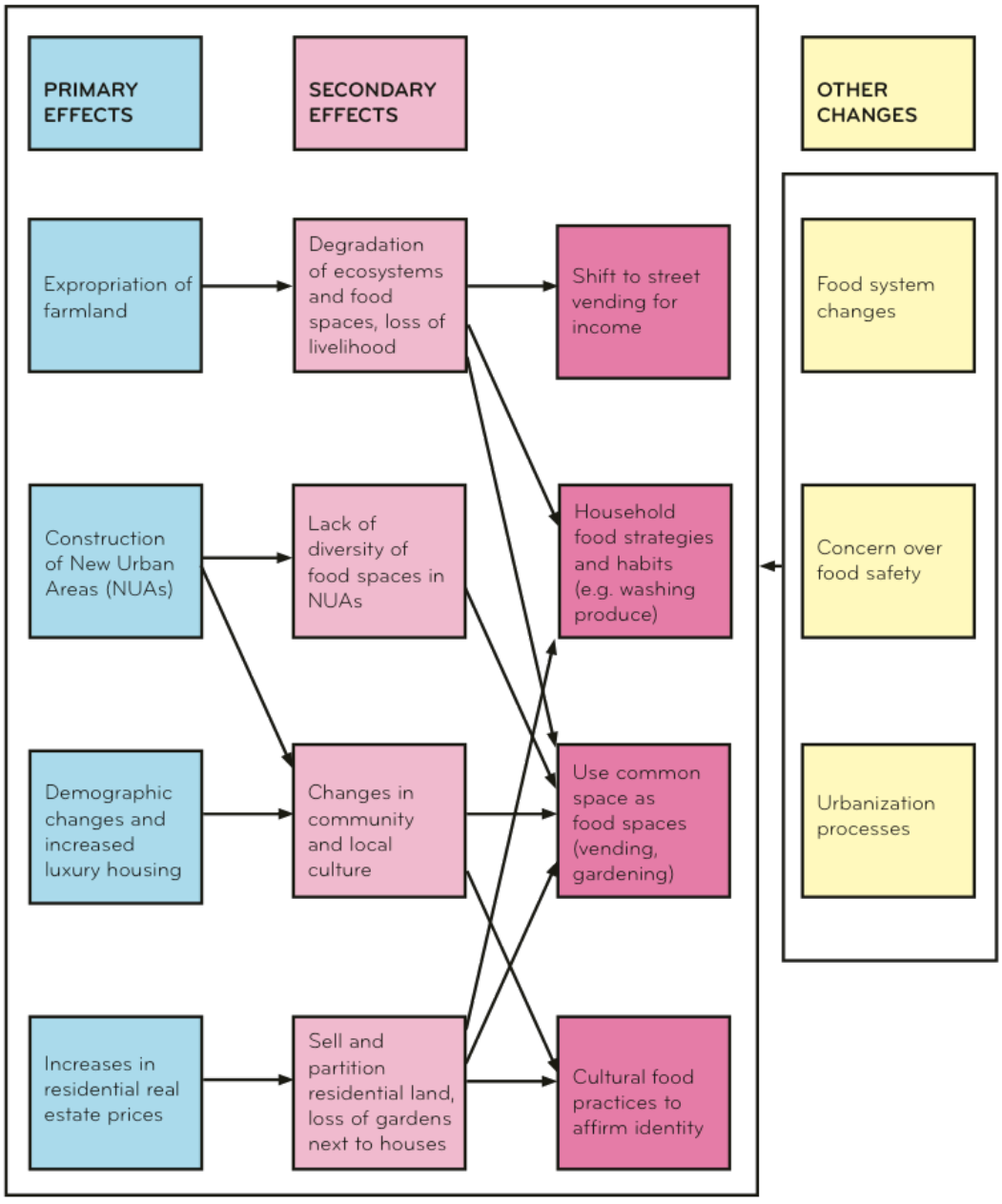


Figure 10 Effect of gentrification on foodways in Hanoi

'Primary effects' are immediate effects such as increases in residential rent, construction of new urban areas, expropriation of farmland. 'Secondary effects' are in great part a result of these primary effects. 'Other changes' are independent from gentrification, but further compound these dynamics, such as centralisation of food system, increased concern over food safety, and the rapid growth of cities such as Hanoi in South East Asia.

Conclusion: gentrification as life displacement

In introducing Montreal and Hanoi in this chapter, I told the stories of Agnes and bác Tinh, two women whose lives intersected the changing dynamics of their neighbourhood, and whose connection to their surroundings was troubled by these changes. Their stories set the scene for presenting my findings in each city. On the whole, it is certainly clear that food spaces of low-income residents were negatively affected by gentrification. In both cities, gentrification disrupted people's use of common space and where people got their food. In addition, in both cities, people responded by changing their food habits and working together with neighbours and family to address their food needs, as well as taking over common space to increase connections and engage in informal vending. In Hanoi, informal vending was more pronounced, as was dependence on subsistence agriculture. Cultural impacts, and culture-oriented responses, were also more visible. In Hanoi especially, ecological degradation was closely connected to people's lived experience of gentrification. In Montreal, the issues of closed and less accessible food spaces and changes in community food provision was most directly felt by low-income residents—compounded by increased alienation and loneliness already present in society. In addition, civil society was also much more involved in responding to the changes in foodways resulting from gentrification.

These differences must be understood in terms of each city's contexts. In Hanoi, development remains highly shaped by informal land uses, which, in turn, shapes how people respond to changes in their environment. The recent experience of communism and a rapidly urbanising peasant society are also important. As many farmers held titles to land due to land reform policies implemented until the early 1980s, they were able to benefit from the real estate boom accelerating in the 1990s. This led to both formal (e.g. expanding your house into your garden) and informal (e.g. building on farmland without an adequate permit) development—which in turn affected food provision. Though land use is highly planned by the central government, there is a latent permissibility for informal and temporary use of land, such as for gardening and vending. And people's experience of subsistence gardening continues to be significant for many people in their response to the loss of land and livelihood. The spiritual and cultural context also matters a lot, as people's relationship to the land is linked to, for example, village identity, worship of

ancestors, and protecting of spiritual spaces such as temples and shrines—resulting in cultural sites being key areas of conflict and confrontation in resistance to gentrification. Finally, the local party cadre structure, and the relative absence of civil society, means that people navigate gentrification is through drawing on personal connections with officials, but also must modulate their resistance through permissible avenues (which I explore at length in Chapter 7). It is in this way that gentrification's effects on foodways, and people's responses to it, are embedded within unique political economic, cultural, and social dynamics.

In Montreal, gentrification—and people's responses to it—is rather distinguished by a highly commodified food system, highly formalised land use regimes, the history of post-industrialism, and the role of civil society. Many of people's responses to gentrification, and the way they were affected, involved private businesses, their closure, or their renovation. Rather than emerging from a subsistence-based society, Canada's political economy is already highly embedded in what Karl Marx called the 'cold cash nexus' (Marx and Engels, 1962: 1:34, 44-45). For Montreal's working class residents, subsistence survival would amount to starvation. High levels of formalisation of land use—and criminalisation of those who do not respect land use rights—also means that there is little room for the kinds of large-scale gardening and public vending as there is in Hanoi. Nevertheless, certain spaces are still viable for gardening, such as derelict industrial sites, alleys, wild spaces, and empty lots—though this is decreasing with gentrification, as interviewees noted. In addition, the working class history of the area also means that residents have seen the slow disintegration of their culture and community. The lack of decommodified or affordable spaces for low income residents has also resulted in increased isolation and alienation. As I explore further in Chapter 7, civil society groups have a near-monopoly on institutionalised responses to gentrification, both in terms of guaranteeing food access to those who can no longer afford to buy food, and in terms of resistance to the process. In Montreal, the gentrified exist under a regime of 'bare life' (Agamben, 2008), but this is not entirely generalised: there are still spaces to maneouvre and resist.

What holds for both cities is that gentrification occurred in all streams of life, from the sphere of reproduction to community and ecological relations. The neighbourhoods studied were places where direct displacement could be said to be

occurring in only a muted way, however, it was clear that other forms of displacement were felt by residents we interviewed. In order to encapsulate how gentrification affects the ecosystems people rely on, as well as their culture, their foodways, and their relationships, I propose the term 'life displacement'. More specific than indirect displacement—and, like cultural and phenomenological displacement, a sub-category of it—life displacement takes place at the crossroads of people's foodways, engagement with their surroundings, social, and cultural life. This corresponds to calls to reconceptualise displacement as a process that spans material, ecological, emotional, financial, and affective modalities (Elliot-Cooper *et al.*, 2020). Specifically, 'life displacement' encapsulates the way that gentrification does not just (or not even always) involve the physical displacement of the body, but also of the material life that people rely on, the ground that affords people the capacity to build community and maintain connections.

Yet, though gentrification may erode and displace material life in this way, it is also through material life that people resist the process. This is the subject of Chapter 6—where I show how it is through these foodways, and material life more broadly, that people's resistance to gentrification was activated. But, how does material life *affect gentrification*, in turn? This question is the subject of Chapter 7, where I describe how gentrification in both Montreal and Hanoi was embedded in political and economic institutions that drew on, or eroded, material life processes in order to facilitate the creation of capitalist value. Material life, as I show in the next two chapters, is both the soil that enables the commodification of the neighbourhood, and the ground for resistance to the process.

The findings presented in this chapter link gentrification to other important processes: the rise of loneliness, the encroachment and policing of common space, urban ecologies, rurality, and subaltern forms of resistance. Importantly, the research highlights how, through gentrification, nature and common space became codified, sanitised, and anonymous—a process documented in research on neoliberal natures and the 'nature of gentrification', which highlights how urban development processes serve to sanitise and make a spectacle of urban space and experience, resulting in the degradation of existing socio-ecological relations (Checker, 2011; Heynen, 2006; Quastel, 2009; Bryson, 2013; McCarthy and Prudham, 2004; Gabriel, 2016). Adding

to this research, this chapter shows how such processes also occur in a Global South city like Hanoi, albeit in different, and unique ways.

More broadly, the research opens up land as a site of conflict and as ground for resistance—rather than the commodity of rent alone. Housing is certainly important; both case studies highlight the interaction between rising real estate prices and changing foodways, and how this double process leads to life displacement. Nevertheless, the findings point to the need to look beyond housing alone and toward the role that commercial spaces (e.g. diners, street vending), common space, and community relations have in impacting a community's reproduction. In terms of strategies to address the impacts of gentrification, the findings point to the need to safeguard spaces for social reproduction in neighbourhoods faced by gentrification and to support residents' self-organised strategies responding to gentrification, such as collective buying or street vending, as well as policies which allow diverse land uses that support low-income residents.

Chapter 6

Subaltern urbanism, North and South

In this chapter, I attend to what is often left unsaid and unnoticed. I aim to respond to the challenge identified in Chapter 2: that subaltern urbanism be useful for the Global North as well as the Global South. I respond to this challenge by engaging, in closer detail, with profiles of interviewees, clustered around six stories in particular—three each in Montreal and Hanoi. By engaging with people's lived reality the everyday strategies that people use to mobilise 'weapons of the weak' and forms of resistance grounded in material life become visible. The stories also illustrate the different values that underlie people's actions, such as, but not limited to: freedom, mutual aid, reciprocity, belonging, independence, pride in work, spirituality, abundance in the face of limits, and community identity. Indeed, I find that it is within this interplay between material life, everyday resistance, and value formation that political action can occur in response to gentrification. I further argue that we cannot understand gentrification within binaries of urban and rural, social and natural, formal and informal. Just as sticking rigidly to these binaries in the Global South cannot help us understand urban transformations taking place, so too must they be destabilised in the Global North. In the following, I present three themes in Hanoi—autonomy and security, taking over the commons, and spirituality—and three themes in Montreal—the importance of informal networks, the continuity between use of the commons with political action, and the sense of limited abundance. In each case I begin by profiling an interviewee's story, then describe similar stories and responses that came up throughout the interviews.

Farming as freedom and security

As I explained in Chapters 4 and 5, a significant dynamic in Hanoi's gentrification is the expropriation of farmland to make way for new urban areas. What strategies do farmers use when responding to this dramatic change? To understand this, it is

important to first understand how farmers saw their connection to the land and what they found important about village life.

In my research I found that farmers saw their work—and their relationships—as a safety net and as a site of freedom. This was seen in our group discussion with 9 farmers (code 74), when we asked them what they liked about their village. For them, what distinguished village life over city life was the way they supported each other.

> 2: In this rural area, villagers are very close, gathering is always very fun.
> 1: Here we will come over to one another's house to hang out, it's not like only caring about yourself.
> Van: So you still prefer living here, why?
> 3: We have been living together for a long time, we really understand one another, we share every little thing, like these few guavas. In the city you close your door, that's it. For example, you close your door, we don't know if you go out or you come back. Here we go over to one another for tea in the evening.
> 5: Even these few sour starfruits are brought here to share, don't you see?
> Van: Is there anything else you like about this place compared to others? Is it easier to make a living here?
> 5: The first thing we like about living here is we are familiar with one another. We have lived together for a long time so we know one another, we understand one another, we share every little thing. For example, if I come to live with you, I won't feel familiar, it's not possible. We like to stick together here. For example, we might be here and there but we greet each other always, but like you [people in the city] you might see each other but don't say a word.

Van reflected on the group discussion later:

> From time to time, someone would approach the group, asked 'what is going on here?' and the women replied 'we are having a party' and invited the person to join. There were frequent interruptions from people who were working on the fields, they borrowed tools, joked or other interactions with the group.

This environment of mutual aid and long-term connections was meaningful, not only because it helped foster a sense of belonging, but also because it informed their desire to keep farming, which they also connected with personal freedom. When we asked the farmers what their plan was following the expropriation of their farmland, one responded 'We will see how things go, it's impossible to plan. Some might go sell sticky rice, some do other things.' Then Van asked the following:

> Van: If you can choose to either do farming or do something else, would you still choose to farm?
> 1: For familiarity, I would still choose to do farming.
> 2: This is a job with a lot of freedom.
> 9: Going out to the farms or taking time off when we want to, even sitting down to chat with one another [earlier they talked at length about how they shared everything and knew each other very well, they were all best friends].
> 1: When it's too hot or too rainy, we will just take time off.
> 2: Just like Ho Chi Minh once said, nothing is more precious than freedom and independence. A job with freedom is the most satisfying one.

Van: Would you say it's better than a factory job?
3: Yes, factory work has too many restrictions.

While farming is often characterised as back-breaking work, which people would leave if they had the choice (e.g. see Potter and Labbé, 2020: 10), the farmers we interviewed, and many of the residents we talked to who had stopped being farmers, either wanted to continue being farmers or sought to garden in places where they could. Many saw farming as a space of freedom, where they could make their own decisions for how they could use their time, and as a space where they could maintain their connections with each other. As one woman in the group discussion noted, 'For as long as they let us, we will invest our labour on the land.' Expropriation threatened this freedom—second best would be to turn to street-vending, they said, and doing hired domestic labour was the least desirable option—in which you had little control of when you could work. Factory work, for them, was not an option, as it had the least freedom.

Photo 34 Chatting with farmers.

A group of women farmers take a break from work to share snacks and answer some of our questions about the impact of the Ciputra development on their life. Parts of the development can be seen in the background.

These insights into village life and why people choose to keep farming even in a context of rapid development offer us a glimpse at the kinds of connections that help activate eventual protest against expropriation of farmland. In Linh Dam, cô Tám, a vendor and former farmer (code 11), told us about the protests against land expropriation and insufficient compensation in the village. Though she had taken part in the protests against the expropriation, she did not admit it directly. She only said, 'Everyone here was doing the same thing, it's your right.' Highlighting the violence and repression they faced, she noted that, at that time, starting from 5am, you would see a lot of security guards and police walking around in the village constantly. When talking about her current situation, she expressed frustration at now being dependent on her children after she could no longer farm. After our conversation with her, Van reflected:

> She was complaining about how the compensation was not enough for her to live on in her old age. And when you asked, 'are you going to the market?' I used the phrase *đi chợ*. She said, 'no, I'm just a free loader.' As in, if you go to the big market, it means you pay for the household's food, and she's not paying, so she feels bad. And you asking that question triggered that. If I just translate it, you might not get what's behind that, because it doesn't make sense: you ask, are you going to the market? And she responds like that. But going to the market means, you're spending money to buy food, it means you're taking care of your family. For her, it's really attached to the fact that she's not working. She told us about the compensation money she got: 'It's my whole life, it's all I have left. If I get sick, it will be gone in a moment.' (code 11)

The freedom that farming offered stood in stark contrast to cô Tám's current situation as a dependent, a free loader off her children, stuck street vending in front of her house. Faced with this prospect, she had taken part in the protests against poor compensation. That independence was worth fighting for, even in the context of a repressive regime. For cô Tám and other farmers we met, expropriation from farmland was also connected to the value of freedom and the need for security, as well as a sense of belonging and purpose.

Taking over the commons, building independence

Another important pattern, mentioned in the previous chapter, was people taking over common space for gardening. However, the reasons people had for doing so merit more exploration. Bà Đào and ông Nam (code 23) ran a small garden of organic vegetables in Tay Ho. They were unable to receive land or housing from the commune leader over the decades ('we had no money to reach their hand', said bà

Đào). Out of pity, the hamlet leader had finally given them permission to use a small plot of land, which had been a waste dump for construction next to a new luxury hotel. It took them a whole year to clean the rubble, and then they covered the plot with uncontaminated soil. The elderly couple turned the plot into a garden, which their friends use to store equipment such as street food carts and bicycle repair tools. They built a small shack, covered in squash, which is cool in the summer and where they can invite people for tea. Now, as we chatted, many people stopped by and said hello.

In the absence of financial wealth, and despite their inability to capitalise on the real estate market, the couple turned to the wealth of this plot of land and turned it into a common space, where they can support their friends with small projects and multiply their connections in the area. Through these connections, they have started selling their leafy greens to a restaurant aimed at expats for their salads, providing them with an extra source of income.

Photo 35 Bà Đào and ông Nam's vegetable garden

Photo 36Bà Đào serves us tea in her shack.

Nearby, bà Lợi (code 34), 80-year-old resident of Quang An had her own garden by the lake. She had seen the real estate boom but been unable to capitalise on it, as her oldest son gambled away much of the family's land. While we talked to her in her garden, people stopped by to chat, asking after family, or wanting to buy vegetables from her. In part, she gardened because she wanted to have something to do—her children said she's too sick after her stroke five months ago—but she liked it because it kept her healthy. It also gave her autonomy: she makes 2 million VND every flood ('that's how she counts time', says Van; at 2-3 floods per year, she made about VND 5 million per year; US$215). Through gardening she had also built relationships with some foreigners, who bought vegetables from her. This provided her independence from her son, who she said did not treat her well, and she could choose to spend time with her daughter, whom she liked. She discussed the medicinal properties of each plant as she picked them and gifted some to Van for the balcony garden she wanted to start. Though she was clearly squatting land that was not formally hers, she told us:

> The people who own the pond lease it from the district. They wanted to get that piece of land to expand the pond, but I refused. I used to pick lotus for them, working as a day-labourer. I will give the land back to the district if they want to, but only if they ask me to. But if they do that they have to compensate me for the work I put into this. (code 25)

Justifying her use of the small plot of land by the fact that she had worked for them in the past, she also claimed that the city would need to give her money to be able to take the land from her. Though we were not sure if this would indeed work—she had no claim to the land—the narrative she used to stake her claim to it was in terms of the amount of work she had put into the land over time. Similarly, bà Đào expressed her pride in the garden in terms of how much work it had taken her—attaching measurable value to something that, we could clearly see, had many values that were not quantifiable. The work put in was a token of pride for what they had achieved, despite the costs.

Photo 37 Bà Lợi, in her garden, gifts Van some Thai basil

Throughout our research, we met people who used the land to create connections. In the new urban area of Linh Dam, we met an elderly woman, bà Nhung, (code 41), who had moved to Linh Dam from her village, but had quickly become the elected hamlet leader of the apartment. Most of the food she grows in her garden plot she gives away and shares with her neighbours. As we talked to her, she got several calls

from different residents asking for gardening advice. She proudly said that she knows everyone in the area, not from being a hamlet leader, but from gardening. This was later confirmed to us when we explored the gardens ourselves, and started talking to a random gardener, who mentioned that he knew her very well. Lacking traditional forms of common spaces such as village garden plots, people take over common space as a way to organise collectively. In other words, food was the mediating material for people to both break beyond isolation and intervene in the body politic of their society. It was also a way for them to reassert the values of community and neighbourliness in their new living environment.

Photo 38 Vegetable gardens in the new urban area.

Bà Lich, a hamlet leader, shows us her garden in a construction site of a new urban area in Linh Dam

Photo 39 Informal vegetable gardens on an empty construction site in Linh Dam

Photo 40 Formalised garden plots in the outskirts of a peri-urban village

In each case, women took control of their situation by farming in common, unused space, thereby creating connections and community, as well as material forms of wealth. They expressed this value in terms of work and pride for what they had

achieved. They also used gardening to develop independence in a situation where they had constrained freedom: bà Lich in Linh Dam had been uprooted from her village to live with her son in a new urban area, bà Lợi desires independence from her son, and bà Đào has created a space of her own after being poor for decades, where she can now host friends and create a sense of belonging. To articulate why they did what they did, they drew on values of pride in work and independence. As I discuss further in Chapter 7, it is no coincidence that many of those turning to common space were women, as women are often systematically excluded from the formal economy and the real estate market.

Development in a land of ghosts

Ông Hiền (code 3) was over 80 years old and lived in a cemetery. With the small space he had, he had carved out a meaningful existence, and become the warden of an endangered spiritual site in the middle of a hot real estate environment.

> I give 2 million [of my government pension, $88 USD] to my wife so I can eat lunch and dinner in her house, the rest is for medicine for my back pain. I skip breakfast and save the money to buy unhusked rice for my chickens. I stay in my shack [in the cemetery], and I worship my parents... I am going to spend my last days here. Other people have human friends, but my chickens are my friends.

Ông Hiền is also a member of the Tay minority group and a veteran of the Vietnamese-American War. Despite being a veteran, in the eyes of society and his family, he claimed he had no status. As he said, 'Because I have no money no one listens to me. It makes me weak. Everything comes from my financial situation, even if I'm smarter.' So he created his own status: he told us tales of ghosts visiting him, he was proud of the chickens he kept and the fruit trees he has grown and cared for over the last 20 years. Being rejected by his family, he turned to different values.

Ông Hiền tells us that the cemetery used to be much bigger, but then some retired high officials came in and built big houses on a large part of the burial ground. They did build a shrine for the ghosts who reside in the cemetery, but then took it down when construction was over. The villagers, says ông Hien, believe that these officials will eventually meet misfortune for not respecting the dead.

Throughout my research, I found that when people are rejected by the hegemonic system, they turn to other values, other forms of making wealth. Ông Hiền's story was

a testament to the fact that the new cosmopolitan values manufactured by the developers, and the equation of status with money, are not values held by everyone.

When we left the cemetery, ông Hiền asked me if I could take his photo. I explained that I didn't want to get him into trouble. He wasn't worried about that, he said. 'I'm not afraid. I will die anyway.' I took the photo and, later, when we returned, I gave him a print of it, Van gave him a calendar, and he shared a bottle of his favourite rice wine with us.

Photo 41 Ông Hiền in his garden.

First photo: Ông Hiền asks me to take a photo of him. Second and third: Ông Hiền serves us home-made rice wine in his garden after Van gifts him a decorated calendar and I give him a copy of the photo I took of him.

A similar reverence for the spiritual world, and concern for its loss, was expressed by bác Tinh (code 6), the peach tree farmer who we met gardening in the drained lake bed (Chapter 5). When Tet was over and she was less busy, we asked her if she could give us a tour, so she could tell us how the landscape has changed. Sitting on the back of Van's motorcycle, she pointed at what were now luxury hotels, parking lots, roads, or construction yards, telling us: 'This red-cotton tree,' she said and pointed, 'divided the southern and northern hamlets.' We drove on, 'there used to be a tree here.' 'Here there were ponds, and graves.' She then decided to take us to the cemetery where her family and husband were buried but now lies within the Ciputra compound. She had difficulty finding the cemetery, as the landscape has become a large construction zone, everything changed, the trees by which she marked her way now gone. When we finally got there, she apologised to her parents and her husband that she did not bring offerings this time, as she had not been prepared.

Bác Tinh's farmland had been expropriated several times by development projects: it used to be by the lake, was then moved closer to where Ciputra is

currently, and was then expropriated yet again—and now she farms in the more flood-prone area next to the Red River delta. Yet, it was the limited access to the cemetery, and its probable future destruction, that she wanted to share with us. Travelling with her through the area was an experience in travelling into the past, showing us what spiritual and emotional aspects of her village had been destroyed through development. She saw her surroundings almost as if it were a double-exposed photograph: her memories of a different landscape layered over what was there now.

When we finished our ride, bác Tinh invited us into her house. She took a dried lotus flower out of her fridge, boiled some rainwater, and made tea for us with the dried lotus flower. I will forever remember the moment when she cracked it open—the color was so vivid, her strong and weathered hands treated it so delicately. Her husband made this before he died two years ago. For her to make us this lotus tea, of which she only had a few left, was a real gift. Van writes: 'I will always feel grateful and deeply touched by the generosity of humble people like bác Tinh, who share with strangers a treasure of life experience and memories, without ever asking for anything back.'

Photo 42 Bác Tinh at the cemetery and at home.

Top: Bác Tinh takes us to the cemetery where her parents and husband are buried, in the middle of a construction site for Ciputra. Below: after taking us to the cemetery, bác Tinh makes us lotus tea, made by her husband two years ago. Reciprocity and spirituality were important values expressed by many in our research, symbolising respect for the past and to each other.

In both stories, bác Tinh and ông Hiền responded to development by embracing the ghosts that continue to inhabit the land. Belonging was expressed through spirituality, and it was often this that was articulated in resistance to gentrification. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 5, spiritual sites were important loci for protests and resistance to gentrification. Reciprocation was another important value expressed throughout our research, where gift-giving symbolised a relationship, tying together the past with the present (see Pannier and Pulliat, 2016, on the role of gift-giving for community resilience in Vietnam). We were given many gifts throughout our research in Hanoi, from home-grown chrysanthemum tea to herbs, plants, rice wine, fruit, vegetables, and soaps. What these two stories show is that these connections to the land, traditions, and spiritual beliefs, were actualised through material reciprocation, gift-giving and offers to the dead who continue to inhabit the land. In telling these two stories, I aim to illustrate how spirituality was not an abstract idea, but a value that arose through interaction with material life, and *in reaction to* development. In turn, it was this kind of value, and the connections made through it, that led to the protection of spiritual sites as one of the main claims of anti-gentrification resistance, as shown in Chapter 5. In this way, reverence for sacred sites itself can be seen as a weapon of the weak.

Informal networks for survival

Many low-income people in Montreal took advantage of, and relied on, public interactions with their neighbours. From our interviews, we learned that this was more common in the past, when Saint-Henri and NDG were more working-class neighbourhoods with a thriving street culture. This was exemplified through a discussion with Marcel (code 138), a low-income man in his sixties, using a wheelchair, who had lived in Saint-Henri most of his life. Like others, he underlined the role that mutual aid had in people's survival:

> The values of the people here changed over time. People used to help each other a lot. Even if it was a poor neighborhood, you still could survive thanks to your neighbors. If you need bread, and don't have money, you can exchange cigarettes for two slices of bread. Now the neighbourhood has changed, and it's not as it was in the past, *ils ont perdu leurs place* [they have lost their place]. Now there's only restaurants, and those restaurants are for young people. It's for people like you. Young people don't have the same values. (code 138)

Marcel pointed us to the fact that the working-class culture he had grown up in was very different from the one that was around today, and he lamented that people no

longer helped each other as they did before. He contrasted the values of sharing and reciprocity of incumbent working-class residents, with those of residents now.

However, we found that such strategies continued today, and could be seen as a strategic response to the loneliness that came with gentrification, documented in Chapter 5. One person who clearly fostered all his connections through use of public space was Bobby, a man in his fifties, who was on disability welfare living in Saint-Henri (code 185). Known throughout the neighbourhood, he would put up hand-drawn advertisements on lampposts that he's looking for cheap food deals and antiques to buy. He and his mom cooked meals in their first-floor apartment, which they then froze and sold for $1-3 each. As we talked, he would greet almost everyone passing by. He spent a lot of his time on the steps to his apartment. His survival depended on knowing as many people as possible, so that he could receive donated goods, learn about cheap supermarket deals, and sell his homemade food to people. As Lucie noted when we talked over our conversation with him,

> He's a perfect example of a disadvantaged guy that relies on his neighbours and his contacts. I really think that they're not really his friends, but people that want to help him. He has a good heart and wants to try. He's quite passionate about food. At first he didn't know how to cook, and then he learned. He was bragging about how a chef had taught him recipes. He's always talking about famous people.

To which I responded at the time, 'It seems like a lot of his way of telling his story are for getting legitimacy. He wants to appear like his cooking is really from a famous chef, or if he could he would start a restaurant, to be more legitimate.' What I sensed to be an effort of trying to appear legitimate may have partly been from his concern that this was an untaxed, informal business, and he wanted to appear more formal. Though he is barely scraping by with his disability insurance and his mother's pension, he is trying to pursue his love for food with the little means that he has. Running an informal business, which is therefore not declared in his taxes, gives him needed extra income and, usefully, allows him to engage with many people in the neighbourhood.

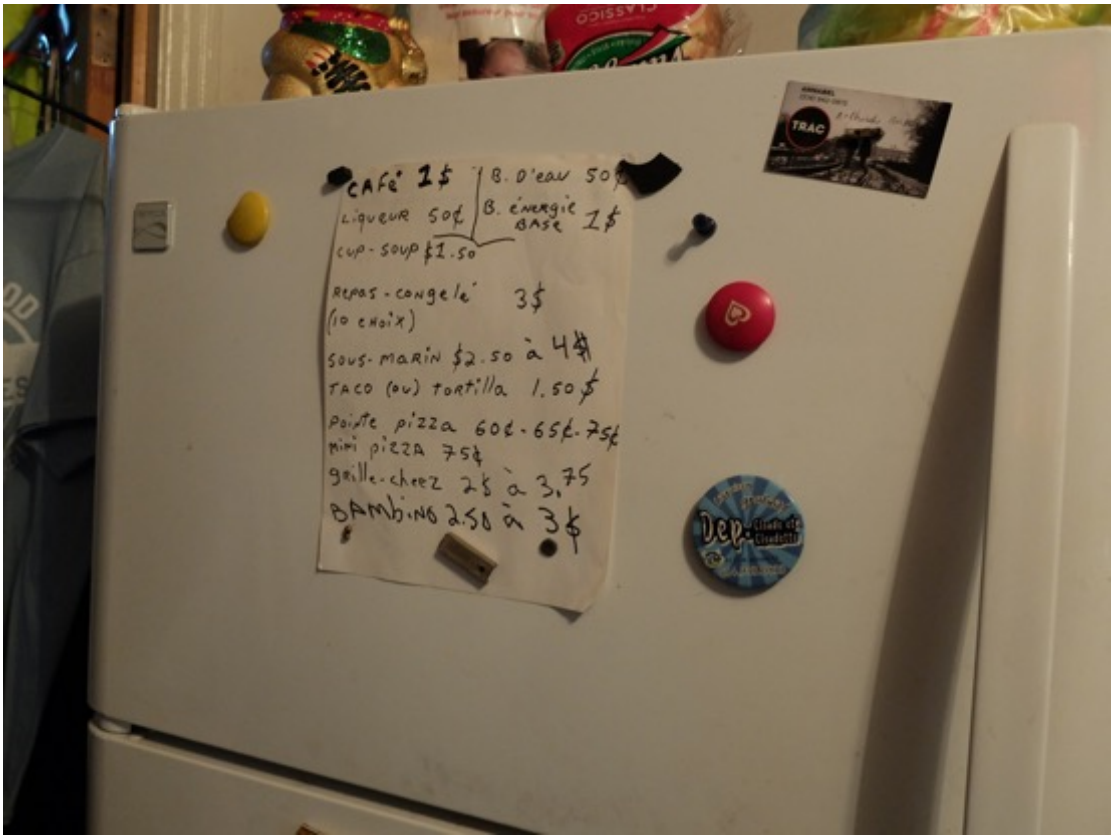


Photo 43 Bobby shows us his homemade prepared meals

Bobby was not the only person who relied on day-to-day interactions. One day, when collecting surveys, we started talking to two men sitting on their stoop—one of them, Ed, was in his 50s, the other, Andy, in his 60s (code 105). I was with Lucie, but they seemed mostly interested in talking to me, so she sought out other survey participants down the block. When she left, they offered me a beer, and they started talking a bit more freely. I found out that they were unemployed and on welfare benefits. Sometimes police come to tell them to get off the street, but usually no one bothers them. They bragged that they knew almost everyone in the neighbourhood. Andy said that, because he knew the owner of the supermarket, she would often give him good prices on steaks and other meats. People passing by would often tell them about deals at the store. Because they were on welfare, they often were looking for small jobs, to make extra income, as he knew everyone from sitting out here, said Andy, people would often ask him if he wanted to do a paint job or trim people's hedges.

Andy and Ed didn't just hang out on the stoop drinking beers because they were lazy, but as a way to make acquaintances. Despite Montreal having a largely formalised economy, residents also drew on public space and engaged in informal (untaxed) economic activity. However, those who did earn extra income did not want to tell us openly—they feared seeing a reduction in their monthly welfare, as well as penalties for not filing taxes. And for working class, low-income people like Bobby, Andy, and Ed, the neighbourhood is a place of long term, life-sustaining relationships. These symbiotic networks form a living web of reciprocity and support, which are fostered on a daily basis.

In Montreal, like in Hanoi, practices of mutual aid, and the exchange of gifts, were clearly present in the working class culture of the two neighbourhoods' low-income residents. When we first talked to Bobby, for example, he didn't want to share much with us. Later, I brought him a fancy chocolate bar. Soon after, he was much more comfortable around us. His well-being was in large part dependent on the kindness of acquaintances, who would buy food from him and find him good deals. Andy and Ed began their conversation by sharing a beer with me. Kate (code 167, see Chapter 7), even as her garden was destroyed, gifted us plants. Michelle (code 140) also gifted us plants from her garden. The many small acts of mutual aid, from sharing taxi rides to the supermarket, to cooking for each other in the communal areas

of the senior homes, to gifting your neighbour home-made canned tomato sauce, represent the way that the social relationships many working-class people rely on are shaped by material exchange.

Stopping a highway with a garden

The use of the commons through taking up public space and maintaining relations was not just a means of survival, but also offered a route to direct political action. This was best symbolised in the story of Elodie (code 170), an elderly woman renting in Saint-Henri for 20 years with her son and daughter, both of whom still live with her. About 12 years ago, she had started a collective garden in the shared alleyway behind her house, facing the Turcot Interchange. Every year, with other gardeners, she would do barbecues and celebrate national holidays. It was also around this time that she was recovering from lung cancer. When it was announced that renovations to the highway interchange would involve the demolition of her apartment and about 40 other buildings, she began to organise with her neighbours to stop the project. They would organise workshops and meetings in the garden. With two other citizens, including Jay (code 187, discussed in Chapter 7), she travelled to Quebec City to occupy the offices of the Quebec Minister of Transport, at the age of 72. They eventually won; only one house out of 40 was demolished.

When we met Elodie, she showed us her backyard, and brought us out into the back alley. The garden had clearly seen better days—the murals were old, colourfully painted planter boxes were peeling, and people hadn't been around anymore to help her weed the garden. Elodie told us, 'Some old friends still get in touch and come back. They ask, "what happened to the garden, it used to be really lovely and maintained?" I still garden, but I can't maintain it anymore, even if I want to, I cannot.' She was now in her eighties, and gardening by herself was getting more and more difficult. We asked her where the other gardeners had gone. She pointed to her apartment on the ground floor. 'That's me.' Then she pointed to the apartments on the first and second floors 'those are students, those are students, those are students.' Though they had won the struggle to keep the highway from expanding, slowly, the neighbours she had fought alongside were displaced by newer, younger, shorter-term, and wealthier residents, who did not get involved with gardening.

Elodie's garden helped catalyse protests against the expansion of the highway. The garden, which was started before the highway project was announced, had also helped to inspire a sense of solidarity and community in a historically abandoned, and rather violent and poor—according to the descriptions of long-term residents—working class neighbourhood. Yet, cloistered from the rest of the city by train tracks to the south and west and the highway to the north, it was a tight-knit sense of community and identity that also helped to valorise the protests and offered residents a reason for resisting. This was expressed in all our interviews with people who had been involved with the protests and was also visible in the signage that was all around the area, installed by members themselves, pointing the way to the various gardens and green alleys that had been installed over time. The values of belonging, community, and mutual aid were instrumental in facilitating protests against development, and these were fostered through the use of, and creation of, the commons. Elodie's story highlights that these collective gardens could also be instrumental in initiating and facilitating the kinds of relationships that lead to political action, and further together a community against unwanted developments. In this way, taking up public space or the commons can function as a weapon of the weak, catalysing political action through everyday tools available to people.

Photo 44 Elodie shows us newspaper clippings on her activism.

Photo 45 Elodie shows us strawberries from her garden.

Abundance is under the pavement

In Montreal, residents expressed pride in their work, as well as a sense of potential abundance in the face of limitations of living in a constrained environment. For example, Bjorn (code 189), a former resident of Saint-Henri, who was low income, had started a garden in an abandoned lot. Bjorn described some of the frustration that he experienced trying to start planting things on the street, which led him to eventually take over an empty private plot of land instead:

> I hated the fact that there were no trees on the street. I remember that there was at one point, then they changed their minds. But the squares were still there. So from the vacant lot, I decided to dig up a sapling and plant it there, all summer and nurtured it, it was going really nice. I had it ready for winter, like staked pieces of wood all around, tied it to prevent it getting hit by the [snow]plow. Then just before winter, a city worker comes along, goes [in French] 'You're not supposed to have that here,' and he tore it out. I was satisfied to hear, it took him—it was pretty hard to pull out. But at that point, I just said 'screw this.' Then I decided, 'I've been staring at this vacant lot, I've been looking at it for years and I'm fed up.' You know, and their way of maintenance was twice every summer they send in a crew to chop everything down [...] There was a really old guy across the street who used to clean up. He was all negative at first, just like, 'oh you're wasting your time, in two weeks it's all going to be back.' But I just decided, I said next spring, I'm getting started, whoever wants to help, helps. I'm not spending money on this.

Bjorn was frustrated with both his neighbours' lack of initiative, and the city employee's attitude toward his work; his efforts to put plants in empty squares on the sidewalk were quickly undone. His struggle with city cleaning crews is reminiscent of the 'escape agriculture' of highland peasants seeking to avoid and undermine authorities, as identified by James C. Scott (2009). Throughout our interview, he stressed how much work he had put into maintaining the garden. For example,

> They saw that I was trying to do something, a young couple, they started lending me tools and stuff and saw what I was accomplishing. The husband was always, 'Get a couple of loads of earth here and everything will be fine,' and after a couple of years, one spring he said that after hauling up compost from the pit I had dug, and his wife looks at him and says, 'What's wrong with you, look at the sweat all over him, he doesn't need to do that!' Because it's all like, quick fixes if people need things, but I mean I'd transformed it. Composting, digging, labour, you know? I always knew it was not mine so basically... (code 189).

Here he expressed frustration at people who would tell him what to do but didn't realise the amount of work he had put into making the garden so nice. But the effort paid off, as he noted:

> Basically that's it, it started working, people loved it, they remarked on it [...] People across the street started. It's like a verdant little paradise, everybody started doing it. And now you look at the building, there are city competitions, there's prizes that were given every year for every category just for that little tiny street, a couple of blocks.
>
> My biggest joy was one time walking by and like, 'Look at this!' Here were three young women with a picnic blanket sitting in the middle of a meadow area having a picnic, with wine glasses and everything, I said 'this is awesome.' Sometimes I'd come by, early in the day or late in the day, somebody plucking at a guitar, coming in, sitting down. It was always the thing. Always trying to remind people, it's for everybody to use, just don't abuse it. (code 189)

Throughout the interview, he displayed pride in his work. What appeared to some as useless labour, and which saw repeated resistance from city cleaning crews, eventually turned into a 'verdant little paradise'. He had catalysed a transformation on his street, and it was this that had been taken advantage of, he felt, through gentrification. As I describe in the next chapter, he noted that, paradoxically, the gardens he had helped start on his street had led to increased real estate value in the area. More specifically, I had a sense that he had felt like he had done a service to the community, which he was proud of, but he had then been excluded from the benefits of it and had not been acknowledged for his work. In his interview, he would also talk about all the missed opportunities and the open urban space that could be used, which he felt frustrated about being underused.

Photo 46 Bjorn's garden, now in disuse.

This attitude of potential—but frustrated—abundance was common amongst many whom I interviewed. Cristina, an NDG resident (code 87), directly stated her work with an independent community group to start residents' planter boxes in terms of abundance versus scarcity. 'We want to see people living with abundance and not scarcity. We want to break down those barriers of access to food.' When I asked her what she meant by these barriers, she told me about a fruit tree planting project she had participated in: 'zoning is really strict so we couldn't. Every single square inch belongs to someone, and you have to get their OK.' Like Bjorn, she expressed frustration with the regulations and zoning that limited the potential for abundance. 'There is no common space in Montreal.' She then talked about having grown up in Romania and coming to Montreal as a teenager. In Bucharest, she remembered, there were mulberry trees everywhere and you could just reach up to pick from them. She had lost that sense of public abundance when she moved to Montreal.

A similar attitude of abundance was expressed by other interviewees like Agnes, an elderly resident of Saint-Henri who liked to pick medicinal herbs in wild lots and found it increasingly difficult to do so as the neighbourhood gentrified (code 146), Michelle, who was involved in a community garden and loved that she could grow

and share food with her neighbours (code 140), and Elodie (code 170), who had organised gardens in her back alley, bringing her neighbours together. For others, like the older women we met at the senior residences who organised collective kitchens (Chapter 7), and Kate who had had her garden destroyed by her landlord (also see Chapter 7), there was a sense of wonder at what could be done with the space they had, and bitterness that they could no longer participate in it.

Analysis: from subaltern strategies to values

In each of the stories presented above, I introduced people who both participated in subaltern strategies, and expressed values that were linked to those strategies. In turn, these values often underscored political engagement in some form.

In Hanoi, interviewees supported each other by sharing what they had, making farming possible as a livelihood. As one farmer noted, 'Even these few sour starfruits are brought here to share, don't you see?' (code 74). They also described the values of freedom, reciprocity, and belonging, and contrasted these values to city life, and to the possibility of losing their livelihood as farmers. Interviewees also took over common space for gardening, which allowed them to form connections with others and achieve some small income. Through this, they expressed values of independence and pride in their work. Finally, interviewees connected their relationship to the land and each other through gift-giving and respect for the dead—whose bodies were embedded within the land, embroiled within the development process. Relationships were symbolised through offerings, gifts, and tradition. Positioning themselves against development, residents articulated values of spirituality and care for the land and its multi-species relationships—as ông Hiền said, 'Other people have human friends, but my chickens are my friends.' Values of freedom, mutual aid, reciprocity, belonging, independence, pride in work, and spirituality in turn were contrasted to processes of development, which threatened to negate these values and undo the relationships that manifested them. In this way, material life, value, and political actions (e.g. protests against inadequate compensation, protests against the destruction of cemeteries and spiritual sites) were directly linked. It was through engagement with material life that resistance to development eventually became realised, which was articulated through terms like labour, spirituality, limitations in the use of urban space, and so on.

In Montreal, interviewees spoke of helping each other through relationships of exchange, and took over common spaces as a way to form bonds and survive. Here again, residents expressed values of reciprocity and mutual aid, as well as the value of belonging and the sense of community. Interviewees also expressed pride in work and the value of abundance, in contrast to the perception of limitations imposed by the city and the threat that their work would be destroyed. Here, too, engagement in material life was directed to values and in turn led to political action, as residents like Elodie brought people together through gardening and helped shape community identity, a weapon of the weak that eventually crystallised the will to engage in political action against development.

What is remarkable through these two case studies is how values are embroiled in material life: subsistence and resistance are two sides of the same coin. This relationship between ecological relations and political action is often acknowledged when it comes to, for example, environmental justice and Indigenous movements (e.g. see Martínez-Alier, 2009), but rarely discussed in the literature on gentrification. Further, values cut through ideas of nature and culture, informality and formality, modernity and backwardness, rural and urban. In Hanoi, residents challenge what they perceive as modern city life for its lack of close relationships, and the disrespect for the land and the dead that comes with it. Living in the middle of a city, residents see themselves as villagers and articulate their struggles in terms of freedom and independence. In Montreal, residents see the limitation of urban space and its restrictions and seek to liberate it through taking over common space, finding pride in the connections that they then help to build. Urban nature and community identity are part of a mesh*work* of reciprocal relations, which in turn activate forms of resistance and political action. It is a mesh-*work* because it takes work to maintain—subsistence and resistance are co-constructive of each other and are situated in an active network of relationships and identities. Material life, value, and political action have a relationship to each other, where each of them are grounded in vital, ecological, and everyday experiences and resistance.

Conclusion: gentrification from a subaltern perspective

In both Hanoi and Montreal, the gentrified were hugely dependent on practices of material life for survival and reproduction; daily acts of kindness and connection,

being seen in public and making small talk with neighbours. Though these practices were already affected in different ways by the changing real estate market, such as the disintegration of a working-class culture in Montreal and the increased isolation noted by respondents in Tay Ho, they continued to be fundamental to people's lives. This form of commoning works as an intentionally reproduced, rich meshwork of relationships. This meshwork relies on the taking up of the commons and becomes a site at which everyday strategies of resistance are practiced. It is a site of the creation of wealth, and the contestation of different values. These values in turn lead to different forms of resistance—from everyday, isolated acts of resistance to more organised contestation against officials.

Another through-line of these stories is that they break down easy binaries, assumptions which often drive the conceptualisation of differences between 'the North' and 'the South', and the approaches required to study each. In Hanoi, peasant farmers resisted gentrification, while in Montreal, commoning practices such as occupying public space was an act of subsistence production and ultimately catalysed political action. Informal and subsistence labour was a tool of survival and resistance in the face of gentrification. Activity such as hanging out in public, sharing food, and gardening were turned into weapons of the weak in both Global North and South contexts. In Hanoi, rurality was a strong theme as gentrification took place at the peri-urban interface of urban expansion. In Montreal, residents also were impacted by changes to their ecological relationships and lamented the absence of abundance and the imposed scarcity which they felt defined urban space. But, as I explore in the next chapter, ideas of Saint-Henri as a village within the city—due to its feeling like a close-knit community—were part of the branding process of the neighbourhood. Conceptions of the urban/social, as opposed to the rural/nature, start to break down, when viewed from the perspective of the rich meshwork of material life engaged with by low-income residents. Equally, assumptions, common in certain schools of Marxist thought, that subsistence activity is not a means of resistance, or that reproductive labour is distinct from political action, are similarly questionable—an insight already advanced by ecofeminist thinkers for decades (Shiva, 1988; Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies, 1999).

The stories featured in this chapter underline the importance of subaltern urbanism for studying urban dynamics in the North, and gentrification in particular. It affirms

the need for research that sees the gentrified, not as victims, empty of agency, but as acting subjects who have the ability to draw on a meshwork of reciprocal and ecological relations to mobilise resistance. Indeed, it shows how displacement is not purely a negative, painful, process, (Elliot-Cooper *et al*, 2020) but is sutured by conflict and resistance throughout. Nevertheless, it also highlights the reality of 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998) and the scarcity faced by Global North working class people in a gentrifying neighbourhood, as public spaces become more formalised and controlled. Subaltern urbanism, with its emphasis on destabilising binaries, defamiliarisation, and avoidance of pain narratives in order to see the 'weapons of the weak' is indeed a valuable approach to studying the dynamics of gentrification in the North.

A subaltern approach to gentrification also links it to broader struggles. The destabilisation of binaries shown in this chapter—rural/urban, subsistence/resistance, society/nature—also indicates that anti-gentrification struggles can be conceptually linked, and seen as potentially allied to, the struggles over labour, land reform, peasant livelihoods, reproduction, and ecology. In particular, as this chapter and Chapter 5 illustrate, the commodification of land that occurs in gentrification indeed further exacerbates such binaries, alienating people both from their ecological relations and the meshwork of communal wealth that they are embedded in. In this way, we could see gentrification as materially intensifying these uneven binaries, and thus part and parcel of struggles against the uneven valuation of different people's contributions and the exploitation by capital of common forms of wealth and value—such as global environmental justice, reproductive, decolonial, and labour struggles. Gentrification as a process must therefore remain conceptually linked to wider issues of 'land justice' (Williams and Holt-Giménez, 2017) or 'spatial justice' (Soja, 2013), rather than prioritising the city as the main unit of analysis. In addition, the chapter highlights the need to conceptualise urban space in terms of the persistence of rurality as a locus of struggle, even *within* the context of expanding planetary urbanisation and gentrification (Brenner 2013; Ajl, 2014; Angelo and Wachsmuth, 2015). This requires more work that links gentrification and, for example, environmental justice, peasant, and Indigenous struggles, both in the Global North and the South (Anguelovski and Martínez-Alier, 2014).

Chapter 7

The sequestration of material life

Sequester (verb):

- Isolate or hide away (someone or something)
- Take legal possession of (assets) until debts have been paid or other claims have been met.
- Take forcible possession of (something); confiscate
- Legally place (the property of a bankrupt) in the hands of a trustee for division among the creditors.

From late Latin *sequestrare* 'commit for safekeeping', from Latin *sequester*, 'trustee'.

New Oxford American Dictionary, 2015

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I showed how gentrification affects people's material lives through life displacement, how material life is a ground for value formation in response to gentrification, and how this, in turn, activates political action. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between material life and hegemony. In particular, I explore the way that civil society or state-in-society, state institutions, and real estate in Montreal and Hanoi are bound up with gentrification, and how they engaged with material life. Rather than theorising from a birds-eye view of hegemony down to material life, I observe hegemony from the ground up.

Hegemony functions very differently in Vietnam than it does in Canada. As Gramsci argued, the state maintains its power in two ways: direct state violence and hegemony—which largely operates through civil society. In Vietnam, direct state violence is very present: from the jailing of activists to the use of direct force by police against protestors (Hayton, 2010; Pham Thi, 2021; Wells-Dang, 2010). State violence operates in tandem with hegemony to maintain control over the population through censorship, fear of repercussions to activism, and limitations on free speech. In Canada, in contrast, there is less state violence as a response to activism. Free speech and the right to protest are protected. There are exceptions, of course, such as through violent military assaults on Indigenous blockades and occupations. In both

case studies, however, I aimed to explore hegemony specifically and therefore focused more on the indirect ways that hegemony is maintained through civil society. I was interested in this aspect for several reasons: 1) the role of hegemony is underexplored in gentrification research; 2) because of the differences in use of state violence between Canada and Vietnam, this was not as easily comparable, especially as doing so may require different methods than those I selected (e.g., observing state repression in Vietnam requires more engaged observation over longer time periods, and is a much more sensitive research topic); and 3) the hypothesis that hegemony has an important but not-well-understood role in mediating material life and value during the gentrification process, which can be compared across contexts. However, this does not mean that state violence is not present in either case study. Indeed, as I further note in the conclusion of this chapter, exploring the comparative role of state violence in gentrification may be a fruitful avenue of research for comparative urbanism. In the context of a new military urbanism in the West (Graham, 2011), there may be a lot to learn from countries such as Vietnam about the form that state violence may take in the future.

In order to analyse hegemony from the ground up, I show how value is *sequestered* through gentrification, using several meanings of the word: gentrification hides away and isolates, it takes and confiscates. As its Latin root suggests, sequestration is often justified as entrusting something to higher powers—who then are able to transform it for their own purposes. I identify five ways by which sequestration occurred in my research: destruction, management, translation, exploitation, and creation. I focus on the dynamics of management and translation more than the rest, primarily because they form a central mechanism of how hegemony relates to material life in gentrification. In each case, I also analyse this pattern in relation to the wider literature on gentrification.

By digging deeper into the role of hegemony in gentrification, I make several important observations. First, there is little research that takes a Gramscian approach to gentrification (e.g. see Rosol, 2013 and Pride, 2016). I show how such an approach can lead to new insights in the everyday dynamics of gentrification, and especially in the way that material life becomes subject to commodification. Second, and following from that, the findings show how civil society, understood in the Gramscian sense, seems to have an important role in this process. It has the potential to help support

counter-hegemonic resistance or, more often, it has a tendency to demobilise and better capture community activity. In Hanoi, the embeddedness of the state within the neighbourhood constantly disturbed people's autonomous action, while in Montreal, a professionalised community sector also actively disempowered residents. The chapter illustrates how the impacts of civil society on gentrification are therefore quite significant, but also very different. I argue that the role of civil society in the gentrification process is understudied and not well understood, but it is also immensely important for a comparative approach to global gentrifications. A Gramscian approach, such as the one used in this chapter, can be helpful for future comparative research for this reason. As noted above, this does not mean that state violence has little role in the gentrification process as compared to civil society—rather, I argue that it may be increasingly present as Western countries take on more repressive strategies to limit resistance to urban development. Third, by showing hegemony's relationship to material life, I am able to extend the findings in Chapter 5 and 6 to show how gentrification can be seen, not only as a process of displacement, but also as a *value conflict* between different actors. This then allows me to, in the next and final chapter, more finely articulate an ambidextrous value theory that can productively be used to understand gentrification.

Destruction

One key way by which gentrification may interact with material life is through destruction. This could be directly, through the ripping up of gardens, cemeteries, or homes. It could be indirect, through the discursive unseeing of material life, as when it is claimed by developers and new residents that there was nothing there before them—justifying the process of 'renewal'. Destruction enables value-formation as it involves destroying what is there in order to replace it with signs more amenable to investment. Often, destruction is tied to ideologies of modernity, cleanliness, or the idea that it is necessary to start over to recode existing investments. Here I tell two stories that illustrate this process. The first is of bác Nga and bác Hùng, an elderly couple in Tay Ho, and the second is of Kate, an elderly resident in NDG.

As Van and I were biking through Tay Ho we noticed an old couple (code 31) planting and maintaining vegetable boxes. We got off our motorbikes and walked up to talk to them. The old woman asked us if we wanted her to move them—seeming to

think that we were security guards. Then the man noticed that I was a foreigner, and thought that maybe we were a married couple, and were looking to buy a house in the area. We quickly dispelled them of their hope and told them about our research. They started telling us that their house had been demolished to make way for a large infrastructure project two years ago. Four hundred families in total were relocated, on force of order by the state, and their houses were torn down with heavy construction equipment. ‘It was like a bombing raid,’ said bác Hùng, a veteran and survivor of the US-Vietnam War. There was smoke, rubble everywhere. ‘It was terrible. We were like refugees.’ Van added later: ‘It’s like you have everything one day, and the next day it’s just flat land and collapse and ruin.’ Bác Hùng, who was 70 years old, had been in the military for 30 years, and after that a local hamlet leader for ten years. Bác Nga sold boiled offal at the market. Bác Hùng hadn’t been a farmer, so did not receive any land by the river. ‘This house was all we had,’ he says. Bác Hùng tells us, ‘any land there is I use to garden.’ But it’s not to make money. ‘It’s for safe vegetables, the other families also grow them. We don’t sell it, it’s just to exchange.’ Bác Hùng told us he felt betrayed and disillusioned. ‘There are things that no compensation can make up for. I was sad for months after it happened.’

Photo 47 Bác Hùng and bác Nga in their destroyed home.

Top: Bác Hùng stirs boiled offal in the remains of their destroyed home for bác Nga to bring to the market. Bottom: Bác Hùng holds the bicycle while bác Nga loads the boiled offal; their vegetable boxes and the new infrastructure project are visible behind them

I felt echoes of bác Nga and bác Hùng's story a few months later when I was in Montreal. One day during our research in Montreal we received an email from Kate, an NDG resident (code 167). She was 'in the middle of a gentrification fiasco' and wanted to show us 'the gentrification of my garden.' We agreed to meet. When we arrived, we could see what she meant. Her garden had been excavated to a crater. 'It looks like a bomb hit,' she said. She had been working on this garden for ten years, and in many ways it had saved her life. She had started the garden when unemployed and recovering from cancer. The old landlord had let her transform the garden, but recently sold the building. She did have a disability pension, but this was not sufficient—so she was able to make some extra income by getting small side jobs. She found these through being involved with the community. When we walked around her 'garden'—now a site of violence—she pointed everything out to us, how it had been, tried to give us a sense of what it had felt like for her. She talked about trauma. She salvaged some plants, which she dug out and gifted to us.

Photo 48 Kate's destroyed garden.

Kate shows us her gentrified garden. She says, 'It looks like a bomb hit', and gives us some plants she was able to salvage.

These stories—filled with trauma and rage—are each the outcome of gentrification. Kate is the victim of a new landlord, who decided to destroy her garden to increase the value of the building. Bác Nga and bác Hùng saw the worst of the authoritarian Vietnamese state, which bulldozed their life and dreams without any consultation or agreed-upon process, in order to build a new bridge connecting the

expat quarter to the new airport. Much of the capital they had built up over decades was destroyed in a single night. The experience of a life-shattering 'bomb' connects Kate, bác Nga, and bác Hung. Like many other people we interviewed, each of them drew on material life and their connections in responding to the tragedy that had befallen them.

These stories show how material life may easily be destroyed if it is deemed not useful or simply in the way. Bác Hùng and bác Nga's house was in the way of an infrastructure project that would improve connection between the gentrifying Tay Ho, new urban areas, and the airport. When a large BMW drove past us as we were talking, bác Hùng noted it belonged to the high-ranking military officials living down the street, whose houses had been carefully avoided for the project and were now worth much more. The value created was uneven, but also implicitly relied on destruction of other people's values. The destruction of Kate's garden, a comparatively more minor event, nevertheless had the intention of razing whatever was there before, in order to generate real estate value. These stories of destruction were reflected in other events discussed in Chapter 6, such as the destruction of Bjorn's ability to maintain his garden after his eviction from Saint-Henri, Elodie's fight against the expansion of the freeway to protect her home and garden alley, and the destruction of the cemeteries as discussed by ông Hiền and the nine farmers. Often, it was not housing itself that was destroyed, but rather what made a house a *home*. It was this destruction that facilitated capital's effort to recode the environment.

This recoding is central to the process of gentrification and urban speculation, as many others have shown. Neil Smith noted how gentrification in New York City involved the erasure of what came before it, casting neighbourhoods to be gentrified as unpopulated 'wilderness' or a 'frontier' to be colonised (Smith, 2005). Sara Safransky has shown how green redevelopment projects in Detroit deployed nature to conquer and civilise unwieldy urban space, while deeming certain people expendable and certain spaces as 'empty' and 'wild' (Safransky, 2014). In a case closer to Hanoi, anthropologist Erik Harms notes how the development of Phu My Hung on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City involved a narrative of erasure of what came before it, as wasteland or an empty swamp (Harms, 2016). In Vietnam, such erasure has long been part of a 'civility' (*văn minh*) effort that involves 'razing to a blank slate' (*giải*

tỏa trắng) what is considered backward, first for the purpose of a communist revolution, then for the facilitation of foreign capital investment and the creation of a new middle class (Ibid.). Just as 'the pure multiplicity of rubble is the void that haunts modernity' (Gordillo, 2014: 25; cited in Harms, 2016: 26), gentrification, an extension of the modernising, civilising process, is haunted by bulldozers, dust, and demolished dreams.

Management

Management is a pattern wherein material life activities are limited and regulated, which constricts things that may not be appealing for investment, and does not fit with hegemonic ideas of what is valuable. This pattern was perhaps the most dominant one and the most complex, so I will be taking up more space here than I do describing the others. One key mechanism by which management worked in both Montreal and Hanoi was through un-seeing. Material life was systematically un-seen, with officials pretending it does not exist; in order to justify lack of action on the effects gentrification had on low income residents. In Hanoi, there was also a mechanism of censorship, self-censorship, and surveillance, while in Montreal management was enabled by processes of formalisation vis-à-vis civil society. In the following, I explore these dynamics in detail, starting with Hanoi and then moving on to Montreal.

Un-seeing in Hanoi

In Hanoi, un-seeing was apparent in two ways: through official's engagement with material life, and through the way that material life was ignored in official accounts. I explore both below.

One day, Van and I met with one highly placed urban planner, chú Hòa. Our conversation ranged from the subject of previous research on the impacts of urban development in Phu Thuong, research which he had engaged with, to the history of Tay Ho's trasnformation. Finally, he spoke about the difficulties in adopting the master plan of the Hanoi People's Committee (the highest level of municipal government).

> Aaron: Do you have any difficulties in implementing the master plan?
> Chú Hòa: We have many difficulties. Many problems. In Tay Ho district, there are a lot of informal markets, but now they have to move because of the master plan. In Phu Thuong,

we moved the flower market away from the road. If any market is located along the road, we have to move it because it blocks traffic.

Aaron: Do you have any plans for where they will go?

Chú Hòa: The ward people's committee has the responsibility to organise an area for a new market (code 44).

Chú Hòa saw the main difficulty of applying the master plan to be informal markets. The problem was that they block traffic. As noted by other researchers, the Hanoi government justifies its criminalisation of markets as a mobility issue, as they block the flow of traffic and therefore of commerce (Eidse *et al.*, 2016). But, despite considering this a major problem, he did not consider the *effects* of moving these markets on the local population, and stated that this was the responsibility at the ward level. How, then, did the ward deal with these informal markets, and residents' informal activities?

This question was in part answered when we talked to a highly placed official in the Tay Ho district land-use planning department, anh Chung (code 1). His work, he stressed, was to implement the 2020 Master Plan. Most of this work was to expand roads. This was important because this increases business, services, and real estate profits: 'by expanding the road we can have better real estate value and more business'. Following this, he described the ways that the district works with developers to better facilitate the growth of business locally. When asked if there are any barriers to this, anh Chung noted, 'the residents are not very cooperative.' But, there was no discussion of informal markets, or of how they deal with these. His conversation focused on formal businesses, formal applications for development, and categories of land use, amongst which informal uses of land were not recognised. For high-level local officials like anh Chung, informal markets were simply not there or not to be discussed, as they were illegal and thus invisible.

Photo 49 Informal markets in Tay Ho, often outside of formal public markets

Despite this blind eye, the state does interact with the informal economy. Vendors deal with constant harassment by police. Yet, cô Lụa, a 83-year-old migrant vendor (code 81) told us that the police often would ignore her or not bother her out of pity. In addition, we were told by other vendors that they pooled money to bribe the authorities, stopping them from policing their informal markets. Thus, those working in the informal economy will often draw on pity, tactics of dispersion, and personal connections with state officials to evade penalties and policing (see also Turner and Schoenberger, 2012; Eidse and Turner, 2014; Eidse *et al.*, 2016).

Another way that this un-seeing took place was through official records. Van and I tried very hard to get official accounts of the extent of the informal sector and migrant populations in Tay Ho, and specifically ward-level statistics—useful for evaluating the effects of gentrification on different wards that have seen varying degrees of real estate speculation and luxury development.[47] After little success, Van came up with a clever work-around. For their thesis project, students in local

[47] We identified yearly statistic books and there was no information in these on the income generated from the informal sector or on the migrant population, only on formal sectors such as restaurants, agriculture, manufacturing, etc. We were not given access to the national archives, though we tried. When talking to a highly-placed city official, we asked if we could access this and were not able to get any information. Even our contact with anh Chung, the Tay Ho district official, was gained through personal connections with a university director—but this proved fruitless in finding out more specific data that we were looking for.

universities are often tasked with creating reports on certain aspects of land use change and economic change at the ward level. Through personal connections between professors, university administrators, and local officials, students are able to access ward-level statistics and demographic data not available to the wider public. Many of these student reports are not uploaded online, and must be accessed by those who have university library access. Van placed a call on Facebook and, this way, was able to get several students to scan and photocopy student reports from their university library. Then, Van and I analysed the reports together.

Students' reports, we found, can be seen as a kind of indicator of the official state position on certain subjects, such as demographics, land use, informal economy, and other aspects of material life. On the whole, we found that these reports mirrored the official line: informal economy, migrant population, informal land use, land disputes, etc. were by and large not included. This was likely due to the fact that students got their information from local officials, whose data on the informal economy is limited and who in turn oversee students' projects and may decide what gets represented. As a result, the reports were an interesting way to get a better picture of how material life was further invisibilised, a proxy for how the state sees (or wishes to see) material life.

Some examples of the information found in these reports illustrate the state's way of seeing. In one report, amount of farmland was described as decreasing, but agricultural production and profits increased at an annual growth rate of 6.5% (Pham, 2016). Agricultural production was described as mostly serving urban needs: vegetables, flowers, and ornamental plants (peach trees and kumquat). Yet production for food is 'not significant'. The fast population growth in the district 'led to over-exploitation of environmental resources for housing.' Yet, 'compared to other districts, Tay Ho has good potential for urban investment.' Amongst the challenges for urban development were listed: that it is an old area mixed with modern buildings, and this architecture is 'unharmonic', and should be better 'synchronised'; the rapid development which has a negative impact on the environment; water resources; climate change; and 'how land management is being conducted' (Ibid.: 5-40). Note that in this report, luxury hotels were not seen as the primary cause of pollution, though as I noted in Chapter 5, it was their effluent that had likely been primarily responsible for the fish deaths of the lake and the discontinued viability of fishing in

the lake. Instead, 'over-exploitation' was largely pinned on increased population density.

In another report focusing on Quang An ward, the author also noted that 'vegetables are insignificant' as a source of food production (Nguyen, 2015: 39). In her profile of the ward, the author noted that there are 2,000 foreigners living there, with 55 nationalities. There are 20,000 temporary guests per year, but it was not clear if this referred to rural migrants, or foreigners, or both. The author mentions that construction has impacted traffic and the environment in the area. The author notes that 'people are happy' with compensation for development projects (Ibid: 46).

As we were reading through the studies, Van spoke up in frustration: 'This is meaningless. They just repeat things the way officials do. These papers just say nothing!' Though they do provide some ward-level data about population, there is little information about change in wealth over time, or about what people do with unused land, economic challenges of residents, levels of unemployment, or planning around informal markets.[48] Because these reports were mainly developed through links with local officials, they also represented how officials saw or wished to see material life—that is, not at all. In this way, these reports further mirrored our interviews with officials: informal activities—in other words, the material life of residents and workers—are actively un-seen by the state and its representatives. They are not registered in formal accounts of economic activity, they are pushed aside to make way for development projects, and they are not included in government planning.

This kind of glossing over of those activities un-seen by the state was once again made clear to us when we did a tour of a hamlet in Nhat Tan with a local hamlet leader, as she helped the 12 students of the National University of Civil Engineering to collect surveys. She brought us to different people's houses, telling us about the statistics of the hamlet, and what her job involved. She did not bring us to any houses with migrants, and though she mentioned that migrants were one third of the

[48] Though rare, there was some interesting information in these documents pertaining to land disputes. For example, in one more interesting document (*Đánh giá ảnh hưởng môi trường của việc thu hồi đất tại quận Tây Hồ, Hà Nội [Evaluation of environmental impacts of land appropriation in Tay Ho, Ha Noi],* n.d.), a Master thesis with no name or date available, the student describes the total land compensation claims, dissatisfaction level with compensation, and residents' reasons for dissatisfaction. There may be good reason for the study to be anonymously published, as this information is quite sensitive.

population, she did not work with them in her official capacity. On our walk, we literally passed them by, and ignored them in our survey.

Surveillance, censorship, and self-censorship in Hanoi

Apart from this dynamic of un-seeing, the state-in-society in Hanoi also interacted with material life through censorship and surveillance. For example, when we interviewed cô Tám (code 11), she told us about the protests against expropriation of farms around her village, to make way for the new urban area. When describing the protests, she sounded like she was empathising with them, but, according to Van, 'being safe about whether she participated.' When we asked her if she was part of the protests, she said 'it's people's right to protest. Everyone here was doing the same thing, it's your right.' Rather than answering that she had protested outright, she chose to answer in a more roundabout way. Later, when we talked over the interview, Van remarked,

> [The two women who connected us with cô Tám] were saying that they first took us to [another woman], because her husband is a government office worker, so she's less insecure when you come in and talk to her. Others, [like cô Tám] will be mostly farmers, so they may hesitate. After we left, someone may have come in and asked her what we talked about. There's still a lot of tension in the village. (Personal discussion)

Van underlined the fact that different people may be less willing to risk themselves when talking about political activity, depending on their relationship to state institutions. One woman's husband was a government worker, and she was very forthcoming because she was comfortable in her position. But cô Tám was a poor farmer with few connections and had to be very careful of what she said. Nevertheless, having been wronged by the state, and still very affected by the experience, she decided to share a lot of her story with us, at personal risk to herself.

The embeddedness of the state in material life is a daily reality in Vietnam. The Vietnamese political system works according to a cadre structure, where locals can decide to join the party and thus become nominated for leadership positions. To rise in the ranks of the cadre, people often report on activity that is unacceptable in the eyes of the state, and act as enforcers of state policy. This was made real to us when we interviewed the 12 farmers in Phu Thuong in a focus group discussion. Before the group discussion started, an older man showed up and talked at us for a long time, and asked us what we were doing. Van reflected:

> He said that there are problems everywhere. Later, he said that it is okay to talk about social and cultural matters, but not politics. He stated directly that 'everything we say should fall within a (permissible) frame, because there is a foreigner here, we never know, perhaps he is a spy for a foreign intelligence agency.' He also said he is a veteran and then left to go back to his field. We can't tell if the old man was there because he knew we were coming or if it was just a coincidence [...] At one point, another older man joined the group. We were not sure if he was someone's husband or if he came because he heard that there was a foreigner out in the field. He started giving textbook answers, such as 'There are 8 wards in this district. We became a district in this year. We like it here because we have tradition' to our first question 'What is your favourite thing about this village?' (Field notes, written by Nguyen Hong Van)

It was unclear whether someone had heard of our intent to have a group discussion with these farmers, but the man's early presence in the discussion did set the tone, and Van and Tran Huong Ly—who also helped to facilitate the group discussion—remarked in our debrief after the discussion that they thought the presence of these two men made the women hesitant of being more forthcoming. Later, when reflecting on the focus group discussion, Ly remarked, 'when the man said that, the women became more anxious.' But, as soon as each man left, the women started speaking much more freely. It is important to note here the gendered way that censorship and surveillance takes place, where men are often the eyes and ears of the state, while women, who also are more likely to engage in informal activity to survive, have less access to local officials and hegemonic avenues of power—a dynamic observed by other researchers who investigate the informal economy, who argue that informality can be seen as a gendered strategy of survival by those excluded by formal, highly patriarchical systems (Chen, 2014; Meagher, 2013; Moghadam, 1999; Kawarazuka, 2020).[49]

Even without the presence of party members or people more closely involved with the state, there was a tendency for people to self-censor, in terms of what was acceptable or too politically charged to talk about. One woman we met, chị Hà, a tofu vendor at the market, was from a peri-urban village, which had experienced severe protests against land expropriation (code 15). It was only in our second interview with her that she brought up protests in her village, declining to mention whether she participated. Like cô Tám, she described violent clashes between villagers and security forces. Her story was also not consistent. At one time she said that the protests happened in the next village, at another she said that her neighbours went to jail. As Van remarked, 'she tried to distance herself from it. At first she said, she

[49] Thank you to Dr. Nozomi Karawazuka for insights on this topic.

didn't do anything, she just watched. Later, she said, "Actually, my neighbour organised the protests."' Interested, we asked whether we could visit her village with her. She seemed excited and gave us her number. But, when Van tried to contact her, every time we tried to set something up it fell through; she would cancel at the last minute. So we gave up—though her motivation for this was unclear, we guessed that she may not have felt comfortable putting herself at risk by inviting foreigners to her village. This was another example of how state surveillance and self-surveillance embedded itself in daily interactions and became barriers in our own research process, when trying to understand people's collective reactions to expropriation. As a result, hegemonic institutions of power, such as the party structure, can exert their dominance even without coercion, but through state-in-society embeddedness and self-censorship. This matters for gentrification, as it is also through these same institutions that the state silences and limits dissent—as exemplified by the experience of bác Hùng (code 31), who was a hamlet leader and offered an exclusive compensation deal during the protests organised against evictions, which he was a part of, but who then felt betrayed by the party when he did not receive it.

Un-seeing in Montreal

In Montreal, un-seeing did not occur directly through state institutions but through civil society itself. As noted, many low-income residents we met engaged in informal economic activity: small side jobs to supplement their income or welfare checks (code 105, 167, 185). In all our interviews with civil society staff in both neighbourhoods (we interviewed 16), this kind of activity, as well as collective purchasing or sharing transport costs was never mentioned, even though it seemed crucial to people's survival. Instead, they would mention the fact that people tried to cut spending on food when rent goes up. This is encapsulated in a conversation with Hélène, a community organiser, who did not mention any of the strategies we noted.

> Aaron: And when the rent goes up but people stay in their apartment, what strategies have you seen to respond to that?
>
> Hélène: What we see often is that they try to defend themselves against the rent increase. They go to the Régie [Régie du Logement, city housing board] to obtain… because there are rules for raising the rent. But often that's it, people cut other spending, and for food, when you're poor it's rent and food, those are the two big expenses. The more expensive the rent, the less we can feed ourselves well. We hear a lot from the food banks now, who see people who have jobs but still go to the food bank. People who go from time to time to the food bank, you see them more and more often.... We see more and more people in public spaces, begging,

> or sleeping. We are trying to have a day centre also. We have to create these alternatives. We've lost spaces so we have to create other ones. But we don't have the money. (code 123).

Note here that Hélène's language switches from describing people as 'them', 'they', who are isolated, trying to defend themselves, and the community groups, who are the 'we', who 'have to create these alternatives', and thus have agency to respond to people's needs. In the way that she spoke, the agency of low income residents was devalued, while that of civil society—and their need for funding—was centred. This is just one example but is illustrative of the language used by the community sector in talking about those most affected by gentrification—well-meaning but often disconnected with what people were actually doing, and focusing on civil society strategies alone. Yet, our research had clearly shown that people *do* take on many strategies not recognised by any of the civil society actors we interviewed. In this way, residents' material life activities were equally un-seen in Montreal.

There were several other ways that un-seeing manifested in both neighbourhoods, such as community groups' tendency to take over self-organised collective initiatives to formalise them, or the way by which they could not work with resident-led organisations that had not been formalised into a non-profit (discussed in the next section). One example stands out and is worth examining here in a little detail. Community groups like the NDG Food Depot organised weekly collective kitchen events in senior residences, which were run by a community facilitator hired on a one-year contract. When we attended these events, they were poorly attended and had little participation from seniors—with the facilitator doing most of the work and animation. In comparison, in two other senior residences we visited, a group of seniors had started their own collective kitchen initiative, using senior home funds to buy food in bulk, cook together, and even serve food for the whole residence on a weekly basis. However, on both occasions, these activities had then been forbidden by the city-level administrator overseeing the senior residence—citing unequal access to the kitchen by all residents. The seniors we talked to were quite upset about this—and they now spent their time commiserating in the garden, where they planned outings to the mall and the supermarket. While a formal community group was given unlimited access to the kitchen, self-organised activities were stymied by officials, even if they were popular. The contrast between both activities was sharp: one was recognised as charity and saw little interest from residents, the other came out of the self-organisation of seniors but was prohibited. Yet, even though community groups

recognised that senior homes were an important site to guarantee food security, and set up programs offering vegetable stalls, community kitchen events, and bus service to the supermarket, staff we interviewed never once mentioned or recognised that seniors were self-organising these very same services but were struggling to make them happen in the face of senior residence bureaucracy. In this way, residents' self-organised collective strategies were systematically un-seen, while community groups focused their resources on similar initiatives, but organised them in a top-down fashion, bereft of participation.

Photo 50 A self-organised collective garden at a senior residence in Saint-Henri

Though civil society groups focused on many campaigns to improve the lives of low-income residents, like officials in Hanoi, they did not always ‘see’ people’s individual actions, such as informal vending, self-organised gardening, collective purchasing, sharing transportation, collective cooking, and sharing information about food bargains. Instead, civil society often acted as the manager of state funding and sought to define ‘appropriate’ collective actions—with the often unintended effect of stymieing residents’ own collective responses. As a result, despite the differences, civil society in Montreal functioned with a similar role as the state-in-society in

Hanoi, overseeing the way that people's collective actions and interactions with material life are un-seen.

Formalisation of material life strategies in Montreal

Another important way that material life was managed through gentrification was through dynamics of formalisation, mediated once again by civil society. Formalisation took place in two ways. First, through control over community initiatives, civil society systematically limited residents' involvement in spaces that could help them develop material life strategies. Second, through legitimating only those initiatives that were formalised (i.e. incorporated as a non-profit), civil society also was able to limit the development of new initiatives by residents. The result of these dynamics was that material life in Montreal saw constant limitations and scarcity, which further impacted people's strategies to respond to gentrification.

In the first instance, the way that existing community initiatives were commonly managed was itself detrimental to getting new residents involved. This can be illustrated through the example of community gardens. In general, community groups in each borough are assigned to run community gardens and are awarded funding to hire *animateurs* (animators or facilitators) to run them. Then, each community garden has a president, who is elected by the gardeners and is in charge of day-to-day budget. In principle, the gardens are managed democratically by the gardeners but, as found in our interviews of members of these gardens, administrative tasks come down to the president and, if they aren't present, the *animateur*.

For example, one participant in our study, Michele (code 14) was a resident of a cooperative housing unit, lived on disability welfare, and a member of a community garden. In the garden, Guillaume (code 130), a young university graduate, was the *animateur*, and Anne-Marie (code 131), an elderly resident, was the president. Guillaume described his job as providing advice to gardeners, however, he said that the gardeners here are quite experienced and he didn't have much to do. So, most of his job focused on expelling ('*expulser*') inactive members from their plots; this year alone he had expelled 18 gardeners. Guillaume spoke of a 'committee' that managed the budget, resolved disputes, and organised events. But, after talking to Anne-Marie, who had been nominated as the director two years ago, it was clear that much of the administrative work fell on her shoulders. She and Guillaume tried to get a committee

together to manage the garden, but struggled to get more people involved in administrative issues. As a result, Guillaume, a part-time and temporarily employed worker, became the main interface between the municipal government and the gardeners. Yet, Guillaume's short contract, tied to grant funding awarded to ProVert Centre-Sud, a community group in charge of greening projects, meant that he would not be able to develop long-term connections with the gardeners. Both Michelle and Anne-Marie had been involved with the garden a long time, and they said that now there was much less involvement by local residents in the maintenance of it, since much of the older community had moved out of the neighbourhood, but also coinciding with ProVert Centre-Sud taking control of the management of gardens in the area. Though the garden still claimed to be member-run, this was far from the case as there was little involvement by anyone except for the president and Guillaume in administrative tasks.

Photo 51 At the community garden.

Anne-Marie, president of the community garden, shows us photos of past members. Though many years ago there was more involvement in the running of the garden, she said that now they struggle to find anyone who wants to get involved in its management.

The progression of informally managed gardens to more formally managed gardens was explained to us by Jay, a long-time community activist who ran his own garden. He explained that in the early 2000s, there were many more collective gardens:

> Ten years ago, they had to shut them down temporarily, and dig them up, and put down fresh soil. People were gardening in contaminated soil. We had more of these, they shut them down, thus making it more difficult. Others were too prohibitive, small lots. Now they're three-story condos... In general there's been a real lack of collective and community gardens. They've been restricted. As they reduced the open access to gardens, the interest and demand has substantially increased. (Code 187)

The story that Jay sketches is that the 2000s began with more regulation of mostly collective gardens, out of (justified) fear that the soil people were using was contaminated. At the same time, there was also a shift in residents, with many long-time residents moving out of the area, and a shift to more involvement by civil society in the use and management of both community gardens and unused urban space. There was an increase in formal greening projects and funding, but also less capacity for people to run their own collective gardens, despite the increase in funding available for such projects. These dynamics provided an opening to community groups like ProVert, who were then able to apply for funding to manage the previously informally-run gardens, in turn making it more difficult for residents to start new ones or manage their own.

Several other examples from our research highlight the fact that this was quite common and, furthermore, led to systematic disempowerment by residents from the gardens themselves. I have already mentioned the story of Kate, whose own garden had been destroyed and who had helped to start a collective garden near her home (code 167). However, she felt pushed out from it when a community group had gained grant funding to hire an *animateur* for the garden. She did not know French and so couldn't apply for the position—being bilingual was a requirement. This happened three years before our field research, and since then, there have been three different *animateurs*, each one taking an entirely different approach. When we interviewed her, she remarked that though she liked the coordinator, she was a bit bossy and would just tell people how to garden, so she had stopped getting involved.

Photo 52 Kate at the collective garden.

Kate shows us the collective garden she is a member of. Though she helped to start the garden, since it has been taken over by a community group, she no longer feels like she can be involved.

Bjorn, the resident of Saint-Henri who started a garden on unused land (code 189, Chapter 6) expressed similar frustration with both the limitations in his ability to use space, and the community sector's stifling of residents' activity. When he eventually was evicted from his Saint-Henri apartment and could no longer maintain the garden he started since he lived too far away, he tried to get involved with other community gardens in Verdun.

> Bjorn: I've got stuff growing on my balcony, and I participated in the [name of community garden], the garden that they have. That just got destroyed by the city. Because supposedly there was some kind of a leak that they had to dig up, and then they said everything, the soil was contaminated, so they ripped out the garden that we'd planted there. Then, across from me, you've got the [landmark], and there's a whole big garden area that's also kind of like a community garden, but not closed like community gardens usually are.
>
> Aaron: Kind of open, but organised.
>
> Bjorn: Yeah exactly, ProVert is involved. And I've been watching that, that was really turmoil the first year. The guy was all ideas and doing nothing.
>
> Aaron: Yeah that seems to happen with these community groups sometimes.
>
> Bjorn: Oh this guy was the actual official guy who was in charge. Has the keys to the shed and all that, but this guy was in the admin.

Bjorn then described some experiences where he tried to help out at the garden, but the *animateur* hired by ProVert had his own ideas, which also reflected lack of real experience gardening. This turned Bjorn off of getting more involved, and he had struggled to find another place to get involved since. Similar to Kate, Bjorn's story is one of limitations in being able to use open spaces, first through regulation by the city, as described in Chapter 6, and then through feeling a lack of empowerment in a garden run by an official community group.

Low-income residents like Bjorn and Kate, both affected directly by gentrification, had tried to seek ways they could build material life collectively. However, they experienced frustration when the gardens were over-managed and gave them little space to participate, and because the staff working on the gardens were never involved for long. These kinds of limitations help to regulate and control use of public space, maintaining a level of scarcity and disempowerment for regular citizens. One result is that less and less space is accessible for residents to use while community groups may end up controlling the space that is left. This was one way that 'formal', more legitimate, civil society constricted material life strategies. Thus, interlocking dynamics of demographic change, increasing representation of community groups, increasing funding to green projects, and decrease in long-term residents running community spaces, led to the progressive enclosure of resident-run space. This then interacts with gentrification yet another way by translating material life strategies into capitalist value, as explored in the next section. Before moving on to the next section, I want to highlight another way that material life was managed through formalisation: where residents' initiatives are forced to formalise, in order to become legitimate actors in the civil society landscape.

One story—which I pick up again in the next section—highlights the way that formalisation really shapes citizens' collective life strategies in Montreal. In the early 2000s, a group of residents started taking over empty space by the train tracks and alleyways for gardening and for events. One of these gardens was taken over by ProVert, the community group that organises greening initiatives in the borough. But, when they lost their funding, the garden was up for grabs, and Jay (code 187), who had been peripherally involved with these initiatives but was not a local resident, then registered the garden as a non-profit.

While Jay talked at length about how the organisation he started helped the community, questions arose as to whether the garden was really a community effort, as he wanted to convey during our interview, or an autonomous, independently run project. As Jay explained his story, he often switched between the pronouns 'we' and 'I'. For example, he said that 'We run ourselves', but then quickly switched to 'I' when situating his own role in the project: 'I spend my own money here and feed people much more efficiently [than the community sector]. We have a simple board of directors, who understands what I'm doing here.' Reading between the lines, it became apparent that, though Jay claimed his garden was collective, it was really a one-man show. He had taken over the garden and, though many people came and went, he was still the one that maintained it over time. He had also been the one to register it as a non-profit organisation, which required a board of directors. This enabled him to apply for grants, as well as a federal summer jobs program to hire students. Importantly, it also enabled him to have a degree of formal acknowledgement when making requests to the city, as became clear in our interview.

Being registered as a non-profit, as well as knowing his way around community processes and legal procedures, allowed Jay to navigate municipal politics and put pressure on officials, and present a façade that it was indeed a community project. In contrast, other collective gardens using unused space had in large part been pushed to close by the city, as they were considered unsafe, or were subject to being pushed out for development projects. This suggests that a degree of formalisation may be necessary for citizen initiatives to be able to set up agreements with the state. However, it also suggests that this formalisation may not accommodate collective, informal projects, and in fact stymies them.

Photo 53 Village des Tanneries.

Signposts created by the community about a decade ago, now framed by construction on the Turcot and the new super-hospital behind

This can be seen with the group of residents who had started the garden Jay eventually took over, and continued to run other gardens after he did so. In contrast to Jay, they had refused to register as a non-profit. Amy Twigge-Molecey, in her research of Saint-Henri (2013), cites one resident involved with this initiative, who I call Margaret, discuss why they did not want to incorporate.

> So we started the [citizens' organisation][50] and much to the annoyance of local community groups we choose not to register as a formal group in order to remain informal and less bureaucratic. So we don't really have a source of funding that's very consistent, we just depend on goods in kind and things like this. But because we are not registered as a formal community group, for whatever reason, I have been told that because they feel that because we are less easy to control, that a lot of community groups are very defensive about, and unwilling to acknowledge the [our organisation] as a real group. So, we've dealt with, we've participated in meetings with different community groups for the past ten years, we've been pretty involved so, it's more of a political thing. The problem with the community groups right now is that all their funding tends to come from the City and so, they tend to become very institutionalised themselves in terms of the decisions they make and how apply or fulfil their mandate. (cited in Twigge-Molecey, 2013: 301)

[50] Details are redacted from Twigge-Molecey's account to fit with my own anonymity standards. Identifying organisation and street names were removed to protect the anomymity of residents quoted, while bigger organisations, like ProVert SudOuest and Solidarité Saint-Henri, whose activities are more public, were mentioned in their full name. All text in square brackets is my own.

Margaret offers an analysis of the problems of civil society, where their formal nature constricts much of their political activity. She also highlights the tensions that resulted from her group refusing to become a formal group, and how this made it more difficult to be accepted by civil society as a legitimate organisation.

As these examples illustrate, formalisation allows the civil society sector to 'see' citizens' initiatives, and marginalises those initiatives that wish to remain autonomous and collectively-run. They also show how citizens' initiatives may be under threat when they become more formalised because they become bogged down in bureaucracy, and they also risk becoming dominated by one person. It points to the role that the civil society regime has in legitimating some initiatives over others, allowing those initiatives to become co-opted through formalisation from autonomous management and through well-meaning attempts to preserve them. And finally, this dynamic then gets rolled into gentrification, where official legitimisation can help to break down citizens' initiatives, despite the best intentions of civil society groups who claim to be against gentrification.

Analysis

In Hanoi and Montreal, hegemonic institutions guided and managed material life. In both Hanoi and Montreal, this involved un-seeing material life, while in Hanoi there were also dynamics of censorship and surveillance, and in Montreal there were also processes of formalisation which limited people's capacity to take over or use common space. In both Hanoi and Montreal, the way that material life is managed illustrates how hegemony operates at the level of daily interaction, and how it further stymies people's ability to reproduce social and ecological relations, in an often non-coercive way, and despite best intentions. The role of civil society, or state-in-society, is critical in this process.

In Hanoi, state-in-society was clearly embedded within daily life, both leading to censorship and self-censorship of the people we interviewed. At the same time, the state also actively sought to un-see material life, either ignoring it or criminalising it. Further, people would also respond to this through different strategies, such as dispersion, bribing, and actively drawing on pity from local officials. These relationships were also gendered, and shaped by a monopoly over formal institutions by the patriarchal family structure. State-in-society was highly embedded in—but

systematically also un-saw and sought to control—material life. This simultaneous embeddedness and management of material life then becomes a key tool by which to facilitate gentrification, as explored further in the next sections. This reflects on the literature on Vietnamese political economy, which identifies the role of a grass-roots (or rice-roots) state structure in driving development and shaping responses to livelihood dispossession (Wells-Dang, 2014; Labbé, 2011; 2013). It also is in line with the literature on forms of everyday resistance to criminalisation in the informal sectors (Eidse & Turner, 2014). The findings add to this literature by noting how urbanisation draws on material life and personal connections, while bringing together discourse of modernisation and civilisation to un-see material life—in turn facilitating the capture of rents.

In Montreal, there is a wealth of civil society groups, with roots in radical municipal movements in the 1960s and 70s, which faced professionalisation beginning in the 80s. These now form a hegemonic 'civil society regime' that systematically un-sees citizen initiatives, seeks to control or regulate them, or formalises them through processes of incorporation or taking over existing projects. In some cases, their initiatives are seen as part of anti-gentrification struggles, in others, they are framed in terms of 'greening' or simply poverty reduction, breaking isolation, and so on. Yet, in many ways, despite best intentions, civil society groups may erode and delimit residents' ability to self-organise, and capture citizen initiatives to be consolidated within the civil society regime. As gentrification progresses across the urban landscape, there is also a simultaneous drive to formalise and control informal use of space, as with the garden by the tracks, or the many collective gardens that have since been forced to close or have been abandoned as their caretakers can no longer afford to live in the neighbourhood. In this way, the highly formalised and delimiting nature of the civil society regime is not trivial, rather, it in many ways prepares the ground for the capture of value by the state and capital through gentrification. This is in line with the literature on the role that formalisation of initiatives can lead to the co-optation of original goals and constituencies (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2007; Castells, 2008; Choudry and Shragge, 2011). The findings extend this by showing how gentrification is also connected to this process, whereby community groups may seek to directly address gentrification's effects by, for example, formalising community spaces to

protect them, they may actually risk further alienating long-term, low income residents.

Translation

Once material life is managed or destroyed, how does it then relate to the valorisation of an area? Here I focus on how the translation of material life into recognisable real estate value, or its commodification. I argue that this by and large occurs through 'misrecognition' of material life for the purpose of capturing green value.

A 'pure natural site' in Hanoi

Photo 54 A conflict over nature in a new urban area.

Fishers (top) using the pond across from Mulberry Lane (bottom), a new urban area that has won design awards for green architectural design

In Hanoi, translation of material life into real estate value was visible in several instances. One prominent example was that of Mulberry Lane, a new luxury development targeted at middle-to-high income Vietnamese professionals and foreigners. There, the developer had advertised that residents would be able to enjoy a pond right next to their building. But the pond was run by the ward, not the apartment complex. Just when the development project was completed in 2017, the company that held the lease on the pond decided to convert the vegetable pond to make a fishing area for leisure. They filled in the banks with soil and charged people fees to fish. Instead of a green pond lined with vegetables, it became a pool of mud.

The pond was now unsightly and smelly, instead of green and lush, and the residents of the apartment building felt wronged. They felt they had been intentionally misled by the development company to believe that the pond was part of the apartment complex. After failing to force the development company to do anything, they got together to complain to the ward. They wrote letters, appeared on TV, and complained to the management company of the building. They met with the people who held the lease of the pond—to no avail. There was little that could be done: those who owned the lease on the pond didn't want to give up their livelihood. Chị Trang,

one of the residents and a university lecturer, who had observed the conflict largely from the sidelines, empathised with the other residents of the development. As she told us, 'I'm not strongly against either side, but it used to look nicer. The water now is more muddy, it's not as clear. Even the fish were flipping and it was entertainment, but now it's more for production. It lost the purpose' (code 39).

In Mulberry Lane, developers advertised the area with an eye for the new cosmopolitan lifestyle, and emphasised the local environment as a green space with many high-end food amenities and an up-and-coming area, and took advantage of green space to brand their project to new, upper-middle class residents. New residents saw the green pond as having green value and felt deceived when this was no longer the case. Local villagers, especially those who had to make a living off of what remaining land there was, and even local ward officials, saw the environment as a source of income. Nature can have many different meanings for different people, and this case was an interesting example of how those meanings and values conflict in the development process, across different classes and interests. It was also instructive in how developers will seek to translate existing ecological amenities into real estate value.

This pattern was further visible in an analysis of real estate advertising in Hanoi. I worked with Tran Tue Minh, a Masters student in Regional Planning at Cornell University, who analysed real estate advertisements of apartments and buildings for sale and for rent in Tay Ho, Mulberry Lanes, Linh Dam, and Ciputra. Mulberry Lane apartments were advertised as 'a view of green spaces or lakes', 'elegant', 'airy', 'a completely different class of lifestyle and a perfect living experience'. The apartments were 'like a piece of silk, delicately and beautifully surrounding the natural lake within the new urban area European Overseas Vietnamese Village'. Another area, the 'Sunshine City' next to Phu Thuong, nearby Ciputra, was advertised 'one of the first choices for the cultured [dân trí[51]] people who want to enjoy life' and a 'pure natural site.' Another advertisement for a smaller apartment in Phu Thuong, not part of a new urban area complex, boasted that 'each morning you wake up to a green, cool and clean air from the Red river and network of internal green space, bringing an overflow of energy for a new day... all apartments enjoy direct exposure to natural light and air,

[51] Literally, people's quality—equivalent to the Chinese *Suzhi.* Thanks to Dr. Danielle Labbé for drawing my attention to this point.

which creates a feeling of immersion into nature' and was sure to mention that the 'camera system ensures safety.' In Ciputra, a villa was advertised as 'a meeting point of traditional values and the pace of contemporary life.' In Tay Ho, an advertisement for an apartment facing Tay Ho lake noted that '[West Lake] is considered to have one of the cleanest environments for living in Hanoi'. Another apartment complex in Tay Ho promised that 'The project is surrounded by a civilised neighbourhood with modern high rises' and noted that 'a royal garden on the rooftop providing residents with green space for community activities'. And, finally, an apartment in Tay Ho advertised that it 'does not only provide an ideal living environment but also creates a civilised, closed knit community through frequent community events'.

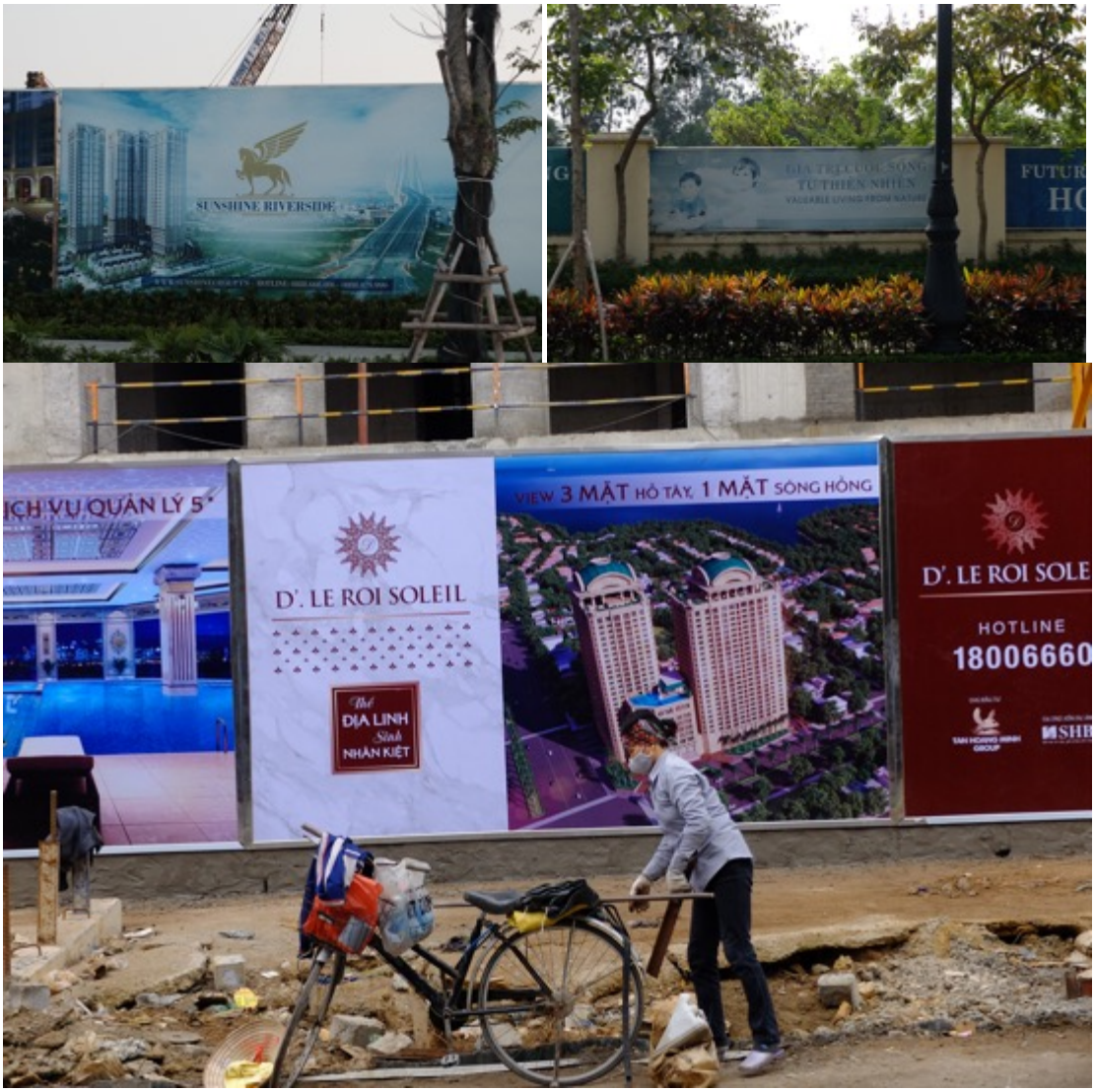


Photo 55 Green developments.
Various real estate advertisements depicting a world much cleaner, airier, and greener

These advertisements mentioned environmental amenities such as lakes, cleanliness, airiness (i.e. lack of pollution), and emphasised the natural aspects of their design and the building itself. They also mentioned transportation options, as well as nearby supermarkets and malls. Only in one advertisement, in Mulberry Lane, was a traditional market mentioned. They also highlighted the culture and civilised community in each area, as well as, in Tay Ho, its spiritual qualities. Tradition and contemporary life were contrasted, as were sentiments of village life and community with modern urban amenities. In other words, everyday practices like street vending, use of public space for gardening, even just the street life itself, were not mentioned, while the area was branded for its natural amenities. Here, while the wealth of the

area, in part produced by local residents, was *used* by real estate agents (the village atmosphere, lakes, the clean air, the quiet), they were *translated* into other, more legible, factors that they perceived would better attract willing customers.

The way that traditional life and the level of community was translated into real estate value, in Tay Ho especially, also mapped on to descriptions of neighbourhood change noted by residents in Chapter 5. As I described, beginning in the 1980s, well-connected government officials started moving in to Tay Ho, part of a process whereby village life became reified as community-centred, simple, green, and quiet. It was in part this value that drew more wealthy Vietnamese and, eventually, foreigners, to living in the district. This reification of 'village' vs. 'city' depends on existing community and ecological relationships built by residents—but it ultimately also unravels those relationships, as shown in Chapter 5.

The city becomes a village in Montreal

Material life was translated into real estate value in Montreal, just as in Hanoi. I have already told the story of Bjorn (code 189), who started a garden but then eventually was evicted from his apartment. He noted that starting the garden had contributed to the property values going up:

> Aaron: Why do you think, cause you kind of took the initiative to start this garden, to start taking space on the street, why do you think other people don't do that much?
>
> Bjorn: I guess some people moved and stuff, it's changed, that's just it, you know. You've got [inaudible] the place started to get nicer, with the old crowd and stuff, but eventually people come in and it's like, 'Oh that's really nice, I think I'll move here, take over,' you know? Suddenly prices started going up. I've seen new people who told me they decided to live on [my street] simply because they saw the garden.
>
> Aaron: Really! So I guess in a way it's a bit of a contradiction. With property values.
>
> Bjorn: Yeah, it is. I wanted to make the neighbourhood a more pleasant place, I did, and people decided to take it over.

Soon after the property values started going up, Bjorn's apartment was bought up by a young couple, and he had had to move to Verdun. 'I fought it as much as I could, but in the end, it's like, they were moving in themselves, so there was pretty much nothing, so I got as much money out of them as I could. Tried to stay in the area, but...' Bjorn recognised the irony that he had helped to make the area nicer, made it more attractive, but was eventually kicked out.

There was also the case of one of the alleyways that residents had turned into a green alley, with planter boxes and fruit trees, which used to face a church. When the

church was burned down in 2008, a developer bought the plot of land, with plans to build a high-end condo. Local residents pushed back and tried to force the development to be more socially responsible. The conflict was then mediated by the city, and the developer then offered to award the citizens $25,000 to maintain the green alley. But, in turn, the developer planned the lawn behind the new condo so that it opened up to the green alley, offering its residents an expanded garden. Yet, the condo dwellers rarely interacted with the green alley, or the older residents, according to one of the residents, who called the condo 'the Berlin Wall' (Agnes, code 146). This green alley then became formalised as Saint-Henri's first 'Ruelle Verte', under a city program which supports residents to turn their alleyways into more green and neighbourhood-friendly spaces—helping in the development of over 700 green alleys, but which has also been criticised for its role in green gentrification (Perrault, 2019; García-Lamarca and Vansintjan, Forthcoming). In this way, developers may take advantage of people's gardening activities to both assuage negative feelings toward the project and make their investment more desirable and profitable. This conflict reminded me of Mulberry Lanes, where developers quite intentionally took advantage of existing ecosystem services maintained and generated by locals. In this case, however, the green alley was legally public space, and the city used the opportunity to formalise an already-established informal garden as part of its 'Ruelle Verte' initiative, which is run on a local level by community organisations such as ProVert. In this way, in Montreal, civil society can take a facilitating role in mediating the translation of socio-natural wealth by developers.

Interestingly, the city-village dynamic was also noticeable in Montreal. One of the puzzles in the research was why Saint-Henri had gentrified so quickly and obviously while NDG, and Saint-Raymond in particular, had seen slower upgrading (Twigge-Molecey, 2009). When I asked Lucie what she thought about this, she noted that Saint-Henri felt much more like a village. The streets were less wide and the community felt more enclosed. This sentiment was reflected in our interviews as well. One new middle-class resident, Adèle, who had moved to Saint-Henri in 2014 told us that 'Compared to other neighborhoods in Montreal, St-Henri is like a small village where you don't feel like you are actually in Montreal' (code 132). Michelle, a low-income resident in her fifties, told us, 'Here, it's like a little village, I know almost everyone' (code 140). What appeared to incumbent residents as a working class

culture of reciprocity becomes recoded as a village experience by new residents. The characterisation of Saint-Henri as a village in the city, where everyone is connected and where people can find a sense of community, was both called on by long-term residents describing what was falling apart, and by new residents who described what they liked about the neighbourhood and why they moved there. Similarly, the renaming of part of NDG as Monkland Village by developers highlights the connection between images of rurality and gentrification strategies by the growth coalition. This translation from a really existing community, to a community as something that has potential real estate value, was mirrored in both Hanoi and Montreal.

Photo 56 'The Berlin Wall', as Agnes calls it

Analysis

The translation of material life into a sense of community, belonging, a village-like atmosphere, and ultimately as a commodified good, was common to both Montreal and Hanoi. When they are perceived as valuable, material life practices must nevertheless undergo a process of translation that 'brands' them to make them legible to an investing and consumer class. In this way, village life gets turned into a

'village-like' experience, a neighbourhood with strong community bonds and tight-knit relationships is 'family-friendly', a green alley run by low-income neighbours is funded by the nearby condo to be cleaned up, and to raise the market price of the condo.

Translation occurred through connecting what existed in the area with circulating imagery that already comes ready-made as a marketable good. Village life, family-friendly atmosphere, green, purity, culture, civility, safety—these are already keywords available for those in the market and are easily transferrable to new environments. The idea of the 'village in the city' or the 'urban village' in particular has been identified previously in gentrification literature and is known to underlie the sentiments of gentrifiers (Moran, 2007). Interestingly, there is some recent research on peri-urban village gentrification, as well as urban spaces as having a 'village-like' atmosphere, based in China, where the valorisation of city-country divisions takes an important place in current forms of urban development, similar to Vietnam (Wu, 2016; Wu and Wang, 2017; Liu and Wong, 2018). In terms of how real estate agencies 'translate' existing values into commodities, Bridge (2001a) identified similar patterns in researching real estate agents in Sydney, Australia, and how they interpret cultural capital to translate it into economic capital.

The process of translation is investigated in more detail by McClintock, who, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, argues that urban agriculture becomes a commodity through the 'misrecognition', by capital, of markers of cultural distinction *as* valuable in themselves (2018). I explored this dynamic already in Chapter 1, but here it is possible to further point out that this misrecognition of material life requires active work by hegemonic actors, and itself leads to value conflicts between residents, as was the case in the almost humorous struggle over the muddy pond in Mulberry Lane, Hanoi. In other words, misrecognition, unlike the coded words it draws on that are already in circulation, is not a ready-made process, but requires active translation.

Exploitation

A fourth dynamic, similar to translation but unique, is that of exploitation. By exploitation, I mean the tendency to take advantage of wealth without direct compensation. Exploitation is often thought of in the context of formal labour, for example when workers are not remunerated adequately for their work. However,

when applied to informal contexts, it may not appear to be as simple as how many hours someone worked. Rather, it involves, for example, taking advantage of community relations, or ecosystem services, without these forms of wealth being protected or sharing in the benefits of gentrification. Crucially, what defines exploitation is that whatever is exploited must be kept in working order in order to guarantee its use, for the time being at least. It cannot be spoiled, as it is in destruction, nor does it suffice to translate it—it is drawn on as a source of potential profit *itself*. Here I provide some examples from my research to illustrate this dynamic.

One key way by which hegemonic institutions and agents exploited material life was through drawing on connections in the community. In Linh Dam, we met a real estate agent, chú Vũ, who had been a farmer and had taken advantage of the changing real estate environment to begin his real estate business, which was now thriving (code 46). Attributing his financial success to his intelligence ('poor people are poor because they can't think... people who are smart, they can make money'), he also noted that he now managed 11 apartments and that most of his sales of houses happened through personal connections, which he then got a commission on. He told us at length about villagers who had not been so fortunate, and had been unable to invest their money wisely or access initial capital.

This suggested to me that it would be interesting to start interviewing more real estate agents. Through some connections, I was able to meet a young real estate agent, anh Tiến (code 45) who worked in Tay Ho and was happy to share what his job was like, this time interpreted by my friend Phuong Anh Nguyen. He told me that he advertised the area as 'healthy, quiet, no pollution'. He also shared that people access permits for renting to foreigners by 'having the right connections, having the right money. If you don't have money, it doesn't work. If you have money, then you make connections. If you have the right connections, you can make the laws [làm luật].' He also described his job: to walk around the area and ask residents if they want to rent out their apartment. 'A big part of the job is to be social. Some people even play chess with xe ôm drivers [motorbike chauffers who spend a lot of time hanging out in the area and know many people].' He said that he sits down with the trà đá (iced tea) vendors to get to know the neighbourhood. 'I'm still learning, but some [other real estate agents] have a lot of knowledge.' By this he meant that he was still picking up

the tricks of trying to find good apartments to buy or to rent out. After he told me that many of the people who invest in real estate are from other provinces, I asked him why locals don't do so. 'As a local you cannot see the profits, but as an outsider you can.' I was reminded here how values first have to be translated to be legible by capital. Anh Tiến, only 23 years of age, was surprisingly forthcoming about his job and the ways that he makes money. Also surprising was the role that social connections had in facilitating the real estate business in Hanoi, and the way that real estate agents like him take advantage of material life practices and food spaces to do business, and their ability to do so was seen as a skill that made them successful.

Likewise, real estate agents in NDG and Saint-Henri were often rather well connected to the community. In Saint-Henri, we were told by members of a community group that they were close to a real estate agent who would often connect with them to try to find out about things happening in the neighbourhood, 'he's the best real estate agent. He knows the neighbourhood, listens, knows everything that's happening.' (code 128). Later, we interviewed a real estate agent based in NDG, who had been in the business for 30 years (code 121). He told us that 'he is well-known here in NDG and has success.' He largely relies on word-of-mouth to get clients. He saw himself as very open, he would 'give people information for free, and hope that one day when people will want to sell they will contact him.' He also, understandably, had a very good sense of the landscape of NDG real estate, noting that Monkland had quickly become a hot spot, and that below Sherbrooke it was considered to be 'slums', but now, prices were going up 'since 1998, the market hasn't stopped'. His office's brochure included all the local charities to which they had donated to and quotes from well-known residents in the area. Central to his job was keeping his ears to the ground, talking to people in the community, and being a visible member of the community.

Photo 57 The road around the lake

Another example of exploitation of material life was the progressive enclosure of West Lake in Tay Ho. As discussed in Chapter 5, West Lake saw steady encroachment since the 1980s when the real estate market started getting hot. We learned from our interviews with experts, officials, and residents that this was done by residents who had waterfront property steadily expanding their own land into the lake, metre by metre. Eventually, the lake had reduced one third of its original size. This kind of endogenous exploitation—by residents themselves—relies on the calculation that more land on waterfront property is valuable and therefore it would make sense to expand one's own plot of land. Given the erosion of collective institutions limiting this practice due to the arrival of private property regimes, a true 'tragedy of the commons' occurs, eventually making West Lake smaller and therefore less valuable (Ostrom, 1990). However, local government put a stop to the practice by building the 'road around the lake' that encircled the whole waterfront and limited expansion of informal construction into the lake, as well as assure a monopoly on waterfront property for wealthy residents. As one researcher we interviewed noted, the 'road around the lake was put there because they couldn't control encroachment' (code 57). Indeed, district records indicate that following the construction of the road, official

land values increased dramatically, at 12 million VND / m^2 in 2005, to 180 million VND / m^2 in 2010 (*Đánh giá ảnh hưởng môi trường của việc thu hồi đất tại quận Tây Hồ, Hà Nội [Evaluation of environmental impacts of land appropriation in Tay Ho, Ha Noi],* n.d.). The development of the road was contentious as it missed wealthier houses and razed those of others—as told to us by residents (code 29). As one newspaper reported at the time about this conflict,

> The road around the lake along Xuan La—Nhat Tan departs from the lakeshore and ventures 40m deep into residential land. This way of building the road brings the houses of three powerful officials to the street front. At the same time, this design brings down 24 houses of long-term residents. This act not only requires more public funds for compensation, but also creates mistrust among the people. The residents propose that the city should stick to set regulation, which is 10.5m from the lakeshore, to build the road. (Nguyen, 2005, translation by Tran True Minh)

The conflict points to the fact that an existing amenity—the lake—was exploited as a means of profit itself, but at the risk of degrading it further. This was only stopped by limiting access through construction of infrastructure, which in turn resulted in uneven distribution of access to that same amenity.

In each example, exploitation involved certain actors taking advantage of existing wealth and using it to create value—but though they relied on this wealth, continuing the practice would eventually result in eroding the possibility for the reproduction of that wealth. This was especially so in Hanoi, where the importance of informal connections for land sales, a property regime still transitioning from communist land reform, and the extent of informal sector meant that real estate had to strategise to be embedded within the informal economy. Further, in Hanoi, many low income residents nevertheless had property—a situation that is very different from Montreal, where, by and large, low income and historically marginalised residents are renters or live in social housing—and thus have little power in the real estate market. More research would be needed on this dynamic: to what extent do real estate agents depend on community connections, and how is this different in countries with different property regimes?

Creation

The last dynamic discussed here is not explicitly a form of sequestration. Rather, 'creation' refers to the *fabrication* of material life, often a kind of commodified

simulacrum of it, for the purpose of increasing its capitalist value. This value is created through the circulation of exogenously developed imagery and through drawing on already-codified signs that have the appearance of material life, rather than endogenous engagement with material life. It is worth discussing here at length because it elucidates how material life relates to the global circulation of capital and symbols, which in turn drive gentrification. Often, creation takes the collaboration of multiple levels of hegemonic institutions—from developers to local government to international investors as well as star architects. It is also this dynamic that is often discussed in ecological gentrification literature: where ideas of 'greenness'—no mater how exclusive—become means for the generation of capitalist value.

The growth coalition at work in Tay Ho

In Tay Ho, there had been many attempts to mould the area as a luxury new urban area. Initial evidence for this was to be found in a report (Iwata, 2007), referenced multiple times by officials and developers we interviewed. This report, published in 2007, was contracted by the Vietnamese government, written by mostly Japanese development companies and coordinated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This report laid the foundations for future plans for Hanoi's urban development (see Figure 11), and is still considered a reference for developers and urban planners today. In the report, the Tay Ho area is seen as an important area for development as an 'urban centre', which includes the future area of 'Tay Ho Tay'.[52] As the report notes,

> The Ho Tay (West Lake) is expected to form one of the most important cultural and environment backbones of the city ... In the past, there were 16 ancient villages around the lake; but now, they have almost disappeared, and with it the area's charm and character. The Ho Tay area in the future should provide the people with better access to the lake, showcase revitalised traditional villages, and stronger commercial value particularly in areas linked to public transportation. (Iwata, 2007: 18)

[52] Literally translated asWest West Lake. But it also has a double meaning as *Tay* also means Westerner, suggesting wealth, modern amenities, etc.

Figure 11 'Basic structure of the proposed general plan.' Source: Iwata, 2007

Tay Ho's mix of traditional and craft villages and its prominence as an international district was also highlighted by an urban planner we interviewed (code 42), who had proposed a plan to officials for waterfront development around the lake, which reconceived the area as 'the new city centre', with its ancient craft villages side-by-side with embassies, government, and commercial districts. His plan would include a museum of modern art, a 'music city', an 'artist village', and an opera house.

Further attempts to remodel the area were seen through a whole host of images that could be found online, depicting different models of future plans of Tay Ho. One such design was the 'Tay Ho Tay New Town' which was slated to be 'a new cultural

hub with international commercial and financial centres under trade services and cultural building' (By, 2012). A more recent newspaper article reported on designs for a future area by the companies BRG Group and Sumitomo surrounding the new airport, which included Tay Ho (Figure 12). The article described a joint venture between the companies of a 'smart city' project of 2080 hectares, with an investment of $4.2 billion (Nhật, 2018).

Figure 12 Design for a smart city project of $4 billion. Source: Nhật, 2018

Photo 58 Stalled construction.

This is where Tay Ho Tay New Town is being planned. Notice the dead potted peach tree, suggesting previous uses of this area for peach farming are not so long past

This maps on to rumours we heard from hamlet leaders and villagers who noted that there were plans to develop the Red River area into a large waterfront development, which had led the real estate prices in the area to collapse, and to a pause in endogenous, informal development of the Red River floodplains. There is also already a large half-built, and stalled, construction site in the area where this development would be placed. Yet, whether the plans will actually be realised is unclear, even if the investment is there and deals have been made. Nevertheless, what is clear is that, like the HAIDEP report, Tay Ho is re-imagined as an urban, cosmopolitan cultural hub.

Other attempts to create a new form of community and material life were common in Hanoi, such as Ecopark, a well-known development on the outskirts of the city of 500 hectares, which promises to be a green living community for the new Vietnamese upper middle class (Provost and Kennard, 2016). Other new developments, like Mulberry Lane discussed above, Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính discussed in the next chapter, are planned as impressive developments that re-imagine city life within Hanoi, promising new residents a civilised, educated, cosmopolitan community (*văn minh, dân trí*) which rises up from the swamps (Harms, 2016). In these examples,

developers, officials, and investors align to promise a new way of living that refer to international tropes of urban living, which nevertheless mimic or draw from caricatures of traditional, sustainable, village living. Yet, being so divorced from existing material life through the 'blank slate' approach to development, they must fabricate it in order to promise potential residents a sense of community and well-being in their new home.

State-led greening in Montreal

In Montreal, creation also took similar forms, but, in the neighbourhoods we studied, were not at such a grand scale. Two examples in particular stand out: the redevelopment of the Lachine Canal into a parkway, and the establishment of a Woonerf development, inspired by Dutch urban planning, in the centre of Saint-Henri.

In the 1990s, the largely unused Lachine Canal was decontaminated and renovated through a $100 million fund from the government. Brownfield sites were also decontaminated and turned into residential areas. Now, condominiums overlook a 14 kilometre bike path along the Lachine Canal—an exemplary case of state-led greening (Bliek and Gauthier, 2007; García-Lamarca and Vansintjan, Forthcoming). Without affordable or social housing lined up along the greenway, it feels cut off from the rest of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the city and developers were able to work together to create a new residential area that promised green living, accessible to public transport, and close to a local market, Atwater. There is little integration, however, between the condominiums lining the canal, and the rest of the neighbourhood. Here again we have a sense of fabrication that is disconnected from existing services and community.

Another state-led project that seeks to create a sense of material life is the Saint-Pierre Woonerf, in central Saint-Henri. The woonerf is a concept, popular in urban planning and architecture circles and derived from Dutch urban planning, where multiple modes of transportation are shared through integration of the pedestrian path, car lane, parking, and landscaping (Wramborg, 2005). In 2013, the local borough redesigned a parking space into a woonerf, which included exercise equipment, pedestrianisation, and greening. While hailed by the media, local tenants and groups argued that there was little consideration of how it would affect rents in an area of

Saint-Henri that was at the frontline of gentrification. Now, social housing and condo developments share space along the woonerf, with developers advertising the 'living street' and the green amenities associated with the space. Community members note that only wealthier residents use the exercise equipment, and the new name of 'woonerf', while fashionable and referring to internationally circulating urban planning techniques, sounds alienating to local residents (García-Lamarca and Vansintjan, Forthcoming). The woonerf is another example of how development projects seek to create a sense of material life, which is disconnected from what existed before, but serves to draw in new residents who recognise the signs and referents associated with the intervention.

Analysis

Creation, as described here, is the creation of value, *tout court*. Here, developers might fabricate a 'village-like' experience in a new development, or create the impression of 'green' or 'cosmopolitan' lifestyles. This kind of value-creation doesn't generally interact with material life, but tries to create a kind of material life of its own, but directed at the new, incoming residents. Often, it draws on already-circulating signs, referents, and imagery that would be recognisable to potential buyers—and attempt to recode the area. For this reason it may be alienating and feel exclusive to existing residents. Creation is an important component of gentrification today, and has been well-documented in much of the literature on ecological gentrification (Gould and Lewis, 2016; 2018; Angelo, 2019; Anguelovski *et al.*, 2018a; 2018b; Bunce, 2009). Creation is unique in that it is largely disconnected from endogenous material life. It does not involve sequestration per se but rather relies on signs already circulating as commodities. But, as such, it also depends on a far greater collaboration between multiple actors within the growth machine, as it requires planning and large investments to create a full sense of community and material life. What is interesting, however, is that despite being disconnected from material life, it still requires some kind of simulacrum of it, because ultimately many potential buyers do want to feel like they are entering a community, like they are connected to their surroundings. In this way, creation still depends on material life, albeit a highly reified and codified version of it, free from actual relationships to the surroundings or the kind of meshworks that sustain material life practices of subalterns.

Conclusion: The sequestration of material life

The above stories highlight how subaltern strategies, taking place at the level of material life, interface with hegemony. In each case, hegemonic institutions worked to alternately manage and capture material life, as well as create it. While hegemonic institutions did not always *directly* appropriate or exploit residents' initiatives, there was a kind of *sequestration* of diverse values. I mean this word in its multiple definitions: it either hides away or takes by legal force. Residents' activities were sometimes taken advantage of, at other times hidden away, at other times formalised legally or absorbed into the civil society sector. This could be through force, or through a kind of institutional blanketing. Its Latin root, indicating trusteeship and safekeeping, is also part of this multi-faceted process; sequestration often is justified as a benevolent action by higher powers—as was the case with, for example, the taking over of collective gardens in Montreal by community groups.

The patterns identified—destruction, management, translation, exploitation, and creation—were present in both case studies and, as noted in each section, are also mirrored in much of the literature on gentrification, and eco-gentrification in particular. For example, cases of translation of material life into a commodity in my research mirrors the literature on urban agriculture and gentrification (Marche, 2015; Pride, 2016; McClintock, 2018; Josassart-Marcelli and Bosco, 2018; Rosol, 2018). My findings suggest that these patterns are likely present in many contexts where gentrification is taking place, either on their own, or in some amalgamation. From the creation of entirely new 'sustainable living' rich enclaves to the slow gentrification in communities where rural life is translated into a romanticised village charm, these dynamics represent different tactics of hegemonic actors to produce the appearance of, profit from, or seek to destroy, material life.

My findings point to the fact that, indeed, civil society has a rather large and important role in gentrification, especially in determining the conditions that allow residents to resist displacement or make demands for alternative forms of development. In both cases, it was civil society and state-in-society that had an important role in facilitating this process. This indicates a need for a better understanding the role of civil society (in the Gramscian sense) in gentrification and

how it delimits or prescribes acceptable action, and, in turn, how its role in maintaining hegemony can be overcome.

These strategies of sequestration of material life also relate to the valuation of material life. Subaltern values—explored in Chapter 6—either become appropriated, un-seen, or simply violently destroyed. Nevertheless, it is through the assertion of values that collective struggles against gentrification occurred, grounded in people's material life and commoning practices—as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Material life is a fertile ground for both sequestration and resistance—fought through the sphere of values. So, sequestration processes also open up a space for contestation against them.

The chapter also demonstrates the utility of a Gramscian approach to gentrification. By tracing how hegemonic institutions interact with everyday experience, I uncovered the ways that gentrification is a quotidian manifestation of the power dynamics that reproduce capital accumulation. This focus on hegemonic institutions can help us see different case studies in their own light, but it also allows for comparison across those case studies. For this reason, a Gramscian approach can prove useful for comparative research on gentrification.

It is important to briefly discuss the role of state violence in maintaining hegemony in Hanoi and Montreal. In Hanoi, this was directly seen in my field research such as through police beating protestors resisting land expropriation, the destruction of homes by the state, and the threat of imprisonment to villagers who organised against exproprations. In Montreal, this was observed much less, for example through the policing of homeless people. The difference in levels of state violence also had an effect on how people responded to gentrification. In Hanoi, residents organised quite confrontational protests against expropriation. Protest actions, while peaceful, were often the last resort of villagers autonomously organising, and, in turn, faced quick repression by police. Meanwhile in Montreal, with the exception of anonymous vandalism (e.g. bricks thrown at storefronts), protest was much less confrontational or militant, was by and large organised by civil society groups, and faced little direct police violence.

No doubt, more research is needed here to explore how state violence intersects with gentrification and enforces hegemony in both contexts. But we do already know much on the role of militarised urbanism in urban development in the West (Graham,

2011), as well as in the South (Ngwane et al., 2017). Increasingly, the state has developed an active role in intervening through direct violence in protecting real estate assets and investments, both in the South and the North. As real estate continues to become entrenched as one of the primary avenues of investment of capital globally, this can only be expected to increase, while strategies of state repression may further circulate around the world. This may mean that the intersection of state violence, hegemony, and gentrification may be attenuated in the coming years. For example, my findings suggest that direct force by the state may be either mediated or abetted by civil society in Montreal, while in Hanoi, the absence of the involvement of a 'third sector' in urban development may mean that there is both a greater need for direct use of force by the state, and correspondingly confrontational protest movements by residents. In turn, if direct use of force were to increase in Montreal, we may expect more confrontational tactics by residents. In this way, a comparative approach, studying state violence as a response to gentrification in countries such as Hanoi, may reveal more about state violence strategies in Montreal and the role that they play in resistance strategies.

All in all, the findings presented in this chapter show that the empirical observation of foodways and, by extension, material life, helps to highlight aspects of gentrification that are often not fully explored or understood—the interaction between capital, incumbent residents, and the state. In the next and final chapter, I summarise my research, and further explain how gentrification can be understood as a value conflict through developing a more detailed schema for how value is formed through gentrification, and its relationship to material life.

Chapter 8

Gentrification as a value conflict

I stood on the rooftop of one of the tallest buildings in Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính, looking down at a wide plaza, lined with gourmet restaurants, supermarkets, and lounge bars. Despite the gloom from a sudden downpour of rain, I could still see Western Hanoi stretching out before me, a mass of grey skyscrapers, many of them half-built. I took a photo. The man next to me, chú Phương, who had had a leading role in designing the development, looked out at his creation with incredulity. Earlier, down on the plaza, he had told me with excitement, bordering on disbelief, 'When I started working here 20 years ago there was nothing—just paddy fields and buffaloes.'

I had to admit that it was incredible. From wet, messy rice fields to this... a new city, with hospitals, schools, shopping malls, gyms, and a thriving nightlife. How had they done it? During our interview, the developer told me that at first, no one wanted to live in skyscrapers. The elevators scared many Vietnamese, and a building taller than seven floors was inconceivable to have to live in. To sell high-end new urban areas to young urban professionals, their primary targets, they would have to create an environment that is attractive to the not-yet-formed professional class, including high-end schools, gourmet restaurants, public space, gyms, ground-level shops, and green amenities. These were aimed at making the area a high-status, cosmopolitan destination, trying to break out of Vietnamese cultural norms where people favor low-level housing and a village-like atmosphere. In other words, in order to sell and profit from these new developments, they had to *create* new values, to manufacture a kind of status that had previously not existed in Hanoi. And it was by making a sense of status around Trung Hoa Nhan Chinh that they had been able to turn rice fields into a whole new district, and sell it to the young urban professional class.

At that moment, on the top of the skyscraper, looking down at the new city, imagining the rice fields before it, I thought back to ông Hiền, the old man living in a cemetery in Tay Ho, who believed developers would eventually meet their misfortune

for not respecting the dead (Chapter 6; code 3). Why did I think of ông Hiền? For one, knowing his story, I knew that, where there were now skyscrapers, there had not been 'nothing.' People had carved out an existence on the rice fields, there were whole worlds and lives here, ghosts inhabited these lands too, as did people whose own values were incompatible with the elite vision of Hanoi. And I thought of ông Hiền because I knew that when people are rejected by the hegemonic system, which measures people's worth and status in terms of money, they turn to other values, other forms of making wealth. Ông Hiền's story was a testament to the fact that the new cosmopolitan values manufactured by the developers, and the equation of status with money, are not values held by everyone. Indeed, if there was anything that my research underlined, it was that, between the cracks of a hot real estate market, people excluded by that system turned to different values, and different conceptions of wealth, for survival and for fulfilment. I realised then, in talking to this developer, that my research was trying to get at the other kinds of value that have been buried in the development process, and the values that continue to exist (and struggle to survive), and are in conflict with, urban development.

In this chapter, I bring together the findings of my research, which then leads me to put forward a schema for the role of value within gentrification. I argue that gentrification is a process which takes place at the nexus of different conflicts over value, and that the influx of capital in an area involves the sequestration of plural values into capitalist value, the main mechanism of which is the *qualitative misrecognition of successive changes*. Finally, I highlight the implications of my research for the different fields I engaged with.

Photo 59 On top of a skyscraper in Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính.

This was all rice fields just 20 years earlier.

Photo 60 The main plaza in Trung Hoà–Nhân Chính.

There are gourmet food options, supermarkets, and a mall under the plaza.

Summary of the research

This study was an inquiry into the role of material life in gentrification—'the soil into which capitalism thrusts its roots' (1979: 229-230)—and how this is part of the valorisation process. In other words, how is the wealth created by a community impacted and mobilised when a neighbourhood increases its real estate value? I approached this puzzle from comparative, subaltern, and urban political ecology perspectives—namely, from the bottom up and through considering people's relationships ecologically. I sought to study gentrification in a way that defamiliarises local contexts, does not relegate its victims to pain narratives, destabilises binaries, and applies insights from subaltern urbanism across North and South divides. In comparing the case studies of two gentrifying neighbourhoods each in Montreal and Hanoi, I paid particular attention to how gentrification affected low income people's foodways—a material, social, and political constellation that has a special place in material life. It was through paying attention to these foodways, 'noticing', as Anna Tsing calls it (2015: 17), and a 'peripheral perspective', (Gago, 2016), that conflicts over value started to emerge.

In the introduction, I began by outlining the contradictory role of land within gentrification. As the history of the Vietnamese phrase *tấc đất tấc vàng* illustrates, land may be perceived as both a source of abundance and a source of profit. Within gentrification, these two perspectives of land are two sides of a coin. This contradiction brings to the fore the question of what the role of the *everyday* is in gentrification: how does people's daily activity, their community, their relationships, become impacted by gentrification, but also, how do these get enrolled into the valorisation of a neighbourhood? This is further underlined by the fact that gentrification increasingly is part of urban greening discourse, where sustainability becomes one of the justifications for gentrification, and where 'greenness' becomes a desirable trait for new developments. Further, the visibility of gentrification around the world as an elite strategy of urban development illustrates the need for better understanding how it's dynamics in non-Western, Global South contexts. Given that property regimes, class composition, race, and state institutions are often very different, how can we adjust our way of seeing gentrification? These three questions—the role of the 'everyday' in gentrification, the relationship between the

everyday and (green) gentrification, and the way that gentrification operates differently around the world—are the main impetus for this research.

In the next chapter, I dove deeper into gentrification research to explore the role of value as it has been studied so far. I began by once again asking how it is possible that, in trying to improve their neighbourhood, a community could then be faced with displacement as their home appreciates in value. Assessing both supply-side and demand-side gentrification research, I showed how each has a different, but incomplete, explanation of how valorisation occurs. The former is focused on the role that property institutions, uneven development, global capital, and the state have in renewing an urban area, often leading to the displacement of low-income residents. However, it does not explain the role of qualitative factors in the appreciation of value of a neighbourhood, and it tends to frame the *gentrified* mainly as victims of a top-down process, rather than co-determinants of it. The latter is focused on more contextual factors such as changing economic drivers, new class formations, as well as new middle class norms and employment opportunities. While it does pay attention to the role that qualitative factors have in leading to gentrification of a particular area, it tends to focus on the *gentrifiers* rather than the gentrified, and often obscures the role of hegemonic institutions such as, rent, the state, and so on. This is further problematised in the context of claims that gentrification is becoming globalised and even planetary: given that much of demand-side literature focuses on contextual explanations for gentrification, there is little explanatory power in cases where these dynamics are not occurring, or at least are not occurring to the same extent. However, supply-side approaches are also limited because they have a tendency to assume certain institutional contexts (e.g. formal property regimes, class composition, etc.) and have a largely capitalocentric approach. Here, a comparative, subaltern approach demands a broader theoretical framework that can see beyond capital itself and can be applied across institutional contexts. In the remainder of the chapter, I assess more contemporary investigations into the qualitative drivers of gentrification, including place-making, mobility, infrastructure, and greening. I propose that the literature on ecological gentrification and food gentrification is especially pertinent to my research question as it often focuses on the question of how community wealth is transformed and contested within gentrification. However, there is still little research on ecological and food gentrification that compares North-South contexts.

In Chapter 2, I further investigated the challenges identified in Chapter 1, namely to develop a theoretical framework that can do the comparative work of studying gentrification from the perspective of the gentrified, across divergent contexts. Before doing so, I highlighted four challenges coming from the field of subaltern urbanism: avoiding pain narratives, defamiliarisation, destabilising binaries, and doing subaltern urbanism in the North as well as in the South. To meet these challenges, I proposed the terms material life, foodways, value, and hegemony as guiding concepts in my research. Notably, I advanced an ambidextrous value theory, which is broad enough to assess gentrification in different contexts and makes a comparative subaltern approach possible. I further draw out the implications of this ambidextrous approach below, for now, I just note that these terms were important in developing my methods as well as structuring my findings.

In Chapter 3, I put forward my methodology. Bringing my methodological approach together is a 'peripheral perspective' as proposed by Verónica Gago and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (Gago 2016)—which is a form of research, following a tradition of embedded urban ethnography, that involves 'following the clues' and 'a mode of *collage*' and 'corporeal' engagement between the 'research topics and lived experience' (ibid., italics in original). As such, research involved unplanned walks, participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, photography, questionnaires, discourse analysis of grey literature, meetings, events, and collaborations—all assessed through multiple iterations of data analysis. Research sites were selected on the basis of how they could 'defamiliarise' accepted knowledge and open the possibility for new things to be noticed. The case studies of Hanoi and Montreal varied greatly in terms of their political economic and institutional structure, but were similar in that, in each, neighbourhoods were selected that were indeed gentrifying, yet still had a significant presence of long-term, low-income residents.

In Chapter 4, I introduced each case study in greater detail, highlighting the many differences and the few similarities. I argue that in both cases direct displacement is somewhat limited: in Montreal, a large stock of social housing in the case study neighbourhoods allows many low-income residents to stay, while in Hanoi, development is largely taking place in farmland, while many residents can stay in the homes that they own due to a process of land reform during the communist era. This means that, in both cases, it can be beneficial to look at other ways that gentrification

affects people's lives—and here a foodways approach is especially useful. I further describe the case study neighbourhoods—Saint-Henri and NDG in Montreal and Tay Ho and Linh Dam in Hanoi. These areas were chosen as they are in advanced stages of gentrification, while there continue to be long-term residents whose experiences could inform the study. Moreover, 'classic' gentrification in Montreal, which has been extensively studied, contrasts with Hanoi, where some say that gentrification should not be considered to be occurring, due to its different property regime and the relative absence of direct displacement occurring. However, I underlined that the definition of gentrification does not require direct displacement, nor does it require that gentrification happen in the 'urban core' or even a strong sense of perceived injustice. In Hanoi, there are definite signs of gentrification (i.e. influx of capital in an urban environment, along with a demographic change) in several peri-urban villages—two of which were selected as my case study neighbourhoods. In both case studies, more research is needed on the kinds of indirect displacement that is taking place—the focus of my research. The differences between the case studies offered an opportunity to compare an under-studied aspect of gentrification—how it affects people's foodways—across North-South contexts.

In Chapter 5 I presented how people's foodways were affected by gentrification in Hanoi and Montreal through sharing the experiences of those I met. In both cities, gentrification led to the disintegration of community as well as ecological relations. In Montreal, this involved the closure of important food spaces and negative impacts on community food providers—leading to the dissolution of social networks, and eventually to isolation and health issues. However, people also responded to these changes, both through household food strategies, as well as through taking up public space and collective action. In Hanoi, gentrification involved the loss of livelihood, breaking bonds of kinship, ecological degradation, and loss of culturally important spaces. In response to this, residents engaged in subsistence activity, took up public space, and engaged in protests. In both cities, gentrification involved what I call 'life displacement', which takes place at the continuum of all aspects of life, including ecological relations, spirituality, and the meshwork of community ties. This is different from what the literature calls 'phenomenological displacement', 'cultural displacement', or the more broad category of 'indirect displacement'.

Chapter 6 further picked up these questions by discussing six themes, focusing on people's strategies of everyday resistance and how this related to material life. I showed how subaltern strategies—through engagement with material life—led to the articulation of different values and ultimately to political action. The chapter, titled 'Subaltern urbanism, North and South', illustrates in detail how a subaltern perspective can be applied in both Northern and Southern contexts. These narratives also break down easy binaries, for example, where cities in the North are conceived to be highly formalised, where its working class is not concerned with subsistence or informality, where gentrification is seen as a highly urban process rather than one which pertains to ecological relations or conditions of rurality. Nevertheless, the chapter also underscores the differences in each case study: in Hanoi, questions of rurality and ecological degradation were much more present, while in Montreal, there was frustration with scarcity and the 'bare life' of a gentrified, sanitised neighbourhood in which one could not intervene and where the potential abundance of material life was systematically impeded. Participants expressed values that highlighted these themes, such as freedom in rural life, the value in transforming the land, abundance, building community through the use of common space, and ecological care. These values, I submit, are the ground of political action. I conclude the chapter with the point that the presence of these dynamics within gentrification in the Global North, as well as in the South, indicates the need to link gentrification conceptually with the struggle over land more broadly.

After having zoomed in on people's strategies in responding to gentrification, and the values that arose from these forms of everyday resistance, I then moved on to explore the role of hegemony in shaping material life in gentrification in Chapter 7. Through many examples, I show how the relationship between material life and hegemony can be said to be one of 'sequestration', where material life may be either appropriated or hidden away. I divide this dynamic into five patterns: destruction, management, translation, exploitation, and creation. Each of these has different relationships between people's daily activities and social reproduction, and institutions of power—which seek to facilitate the valorisation of a neighbourhood. Here civil society has an important role to play, as it may either help build counter-hegemonic forces (as shown in Chapter 5) or work (often unwittingly) to demobilise residents and to subsume community activity into the capitalist valorisation process.

In Hanoi, civil society, or, rather, state-in-society, hampered resident's organising and autonomy, being extremely embedded within hegemonic institutions through the cadre system. In Montreal, the professionalisation of civil society was an important dynamic, which contributed to the demobilisation and disempowerment of residents—a finding that is in line with research on the role of civil society in community organising. These findings highlight that the study of gentrification should involve more of a focus on civil society and how it delimits acceptable action vis-à-vis gentrification—and that this may vary widely across different contexts. As I discuss in the next section, this chapter also clarifies the relationship between material life, value, and gentrification, as it shows how the values that emerge through material life are acted upon, and then sequestered within gentrification.

Gentrification as a value conflict

In the following, I narrow down on the through-line of value as it appears in the study. To do so, I briefly summarise the main findings as they relate to value specifically, before setting out a schema for how value relates to gentrification. The main goal of the research is to explore the role of material life in gentrification, and how material life becomes enrolled in the valorisation of space as a neighbourhood appreciates in capitalist value. As such, it was necessary to first explore how value has been approached within gentrification research. It became clear that while valorisation is closely tied to institutions of rent, global capital circulation, and other dynamics such as changing economic conditions, there is also a large role of qualitative factors, such as cultural capital, mobility, infrastructure, 'greenness', and so on, in leading to the valorisation of an area. However, little research is available that looks at how *the gentrified* participate in processes of value-formation, nor is there much research that compares valorisation processes across different contexts, especially across Northern and Southern conditions.

Following this, I explored what kinds of theoretical approaches could help better understand the relationship of material life to this valorisation process. Importantly, I defined value as distinct from *wealth*, *price,* or *capital*. Rather, value is a social relationship that may exist within capitalism, but doesn't require it. Value is the estimation of the Good in a society; it is the substance of politics and thus central to how we lead our lives. I further argued that an 'ambidextrous value theory', which

brings together both capitalocentric and plural theories of value, would have the potential to 'see' the kinds of value conflicts that occur as a result of the interaction between marginalised groups and the influx of capital in a neighbourhood. I proposed a schema for how to understand the way that values interact with material life and hegemony (see Figure 1, Chapter 2).

In the research, value appeared in several forms. Chapter 5 illustrated how gentrification resulted in displacement, broadly understood, across multiple aspects of life and socio-ecological relations, and especially in the fabric of community relations. In turn, people drew on material life to respond to this process. In Chapter 6, I showed how values arose through this process of interaction with material life. Values such as freedom and care for the land, building community, protecting the home, and spirituality were expressed through people's responses to gentrification. Chapter 7 showed how these values entered into conflict with hegemonic institutions, which led to a dynamic of sequestration of material life, which in turn allowed capitalist valorisation to occur.

This relationship between material life, sequestration, and hegemony can be understood as a value conflict. This conflict took the form of destruction, management, translation, exploitation, and creation. *Destruction* involves the attempts to simply destroy material life activities to clear the way for more desirable values and wealth. *Management* involves the attempts to regulate, police, or un-see material life systematically, either through direct top-down intervention or through rule by consent, via civil society. This facilitates the circulation of capital through demobilising residents' ability to form counter-hegemonies. *Translation* involves the attempts to brand existing material life into recognisable commodities. *Exploitation* involves the explicit use of material life, potentially destroying its capacity to reproduce itself. *Creation* is the attempt to generate dislocated value, separate from any existing forms that material life takes in the locality—rather drawing on internationally circulating values and lifestyles. In all of these patterns, value is fought over and in conflict: existing values are either drawn on, used, put away, or hampered.

Having thus summarised gentrification's relationship to value as it appears in my research, I would like to draw out these findings into a general schema of value's relationship to material life under gentrification. This schema builds on that presented in Chapter 2 (see Figure 1). The question I ask here is: at what *point* do plural values

become enrolled in capitalist valorisation of a neighbourhood? This question is important because it gets at the unanswered question identified in Chapter 1: how can we explain the point at which a neighbourhood gentrifies? In Chapter 1, I showed how, while it takes place in the context of global circulation of capital, state intervention, and the development of a real estate market, this point is often linked to a qualitative transformation. For example, qualitative factors such as new infrastructure, greening, cultural capital, or mobility may 'flip' a neighbourhood to be more desirable.

Here it helps to once again draw attention to McClintock's study of urban agriculture in Portland (2017). The quantitative increase in white people's vegetable plots on one historically Black block, McClintock argues, at a certain point becomes a qualitative transformation, where that block is perceived as 'sustainable' or 'green', and can finally be read by capital. McClintock argues that this is a process of 'misrecognition' of value, where capital misrecognises certain activity as a commodity as it is enrolled in an 'eco*habitus*' wherein greenness is seen as a source of differentiation and social capital (Angelo, 2019), rather than for the various other use-values it has to people (e.g. home-making, growing vegetables for consumption, building community, or social reproduction).

I would like to investigate this a bit more, as it is an important point. While we must recognise the role that institutions of rent, the state, and capital play in driving gentrification, this research is an inquiry into the role that material life plays in gentrification. My proposal is that this dynamic of incremental changes, which draws on material life, creates the condition for a neighbourhood to be recognised as valuable to capital and to become 'hot' in the rental market. This can be conceptualised through drawing on the distinction between quantitative and qualitative change, as proposed by G. W. F. Hegel. For Hegel, qualitative change occurs through incremental, quantitative changes, which then at a certain tipping point, change the system qualitatively (2010). I give two examples: the point at which a collection of trees become a forest, or the point at which someone's hair loss makes them bald. It is not possible to say, exactly, the moment when there is a forest, or when baldness happens. In these examples, these are subjective transformations, subject to our social perception as well as material changes. Similarly, for capital to begin reading a neighbourhood as valuable, successive changes must occur to then

qualitatively transform the neighbourhood, 'flipping' it. Likewise, this is contingent on circulating conceptions of social capital, cultural norms, class dynamics, and so on. Thus, gentrification has a general way by which it penetrates material life, mediated and differentiated by values and material life. It is through this dialectic moment between material life and value that a piece of land becomes a piece of gold.

Below, I represent this dynamic through a schema of how material life, value, and hegemony interact (Figure 13). This schema is an elaboration of the one proposed in Chapter 2 (Figure 1). *First,* forms of wealth are products of socio-natural constellations. These could be metabolic flows, bodies of water, transportation, infrastructure, parks, re-appropriations of post-industrial sites for different purposes, community gardens, and so on. *Second*, these are then made legible as symbols and signs, and valued in different ways by different communities. *Third*, hegemonic structures like racial capitalism, colonialism, capitalism, state control over violence, eco*habitus*, etc., interplay with these symbols and values, reading some as valuable and others as undesirable. Here is where material life, and value more generally, becomes enrolled in processes of destruction, management, translation, exploitation, and creation. *Fourth*, at a certain point of accumulation of forms of wealth, there is an inflection point, where capital starts to be able to see these forms of wealth as translatable, and therefore valuable. Thus, a successive change (e.g. more urban agriculture, a critical mass of cafés, artists living in lofts and opening galleries, a new infrastructural development) leads to a qualitative transformation in the eyes of capital, and the subsequent revalorisation of the area. At this point, there begins a process of contestation and translation into the world of capitalist value. Because of its hegemony, capitalist value has a tendency to win this struggle. But, counter-hegemonic values may emerge as products of this struggle itself—as when the community rallies around a garden slated for demolition, identifying the garden as a symbol for an alternative form of development—or as when artists and factory workers work together to limit speculation on post-industrial land (Zukin, 1989). *Fifth*, the process of translation and contestation involves reification, where these forms of wealth are turned into quantifiable commodities, commensurable on the real estate market. It is at this point that it becomes most intensely implicated in global flows of capital, but, also, is able to re-imbed itself in the formation of wealth. In this way, different forms of wealth are at the frontier of capitalist valorisation through

gentrification and uneven development, but, also, become sites for value conflicts against that valorisation. This movement from wealth, to plural values, to qualitative transformation and legibility, to capitalist values, would be the main object of study when using an ambidextrous approach to value.

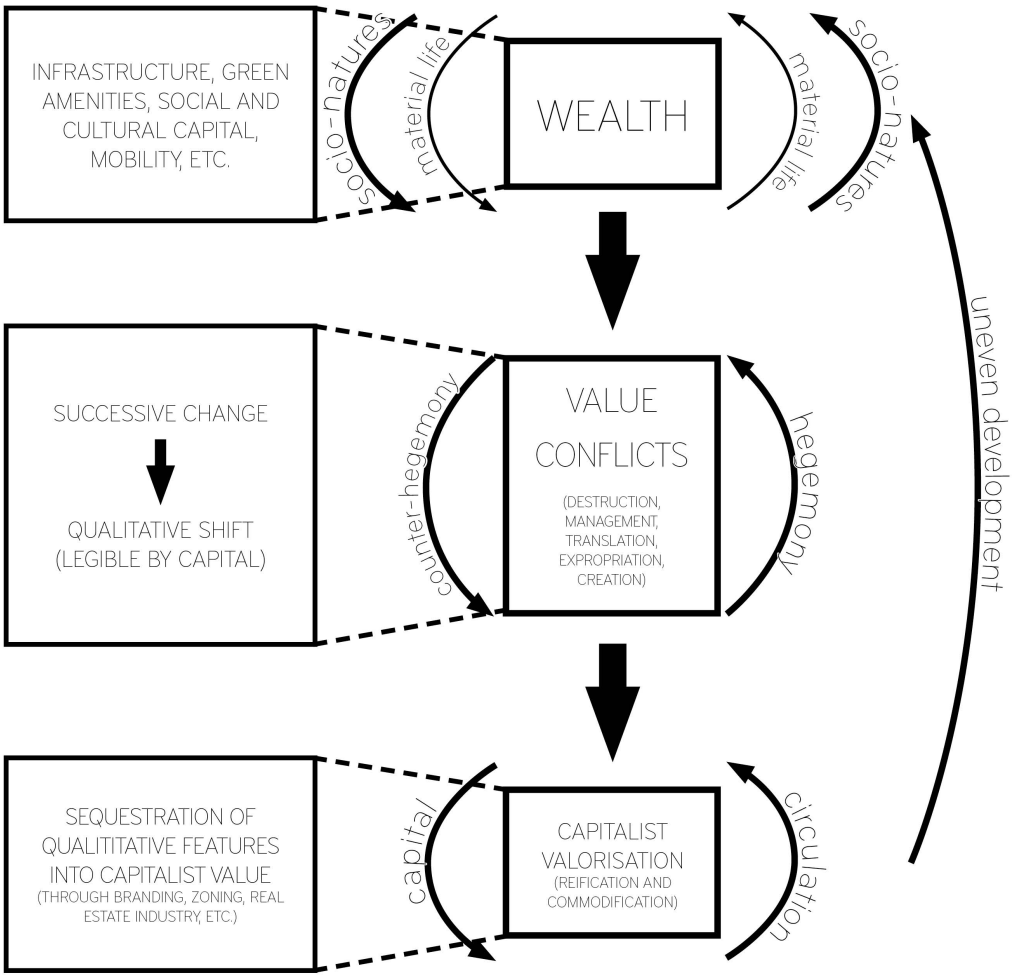


Figure 13 Gentrification as a value conflict.

The process is the same as Figure 1, page 78, but elaborated to emphasise dynamics found within gentrification processes. First, forms of wealth are generated by socio-natures, such as material life, infrastructure, green amenities, and social and cultural capital. Second, these enter into the realm of social valuation. Importantly, here, we see a process whereby the translation of plural values into capitalist value is dependent on whether the socio-natures and plural values are legible to capital. This legibility has a tendency to occur at a certain inflection point where a successive change (e.g. in the number of community gardens run by white people, the social capital tied to living in an area, or a new infrastructural development) at a certain point leads to a qualitative shift, where it becomes 'visible' as valuable. Through strategies like branding, zoning, development projects, these values then become translated into capitalist values and enter into the world of capital circulation. Image by the author.

We could say that it is through gentrification that *both* meanings of the saying 'a piece of land is a piece of gold' become realised. That is, gentrification is a process by which land is seen simultaneously as a source of abundance for the gentrified, as well as a source of value for capital. This contradiction is at the heart of gentrification, and represents the struggle over values that it involves.

Thinking of gentrification as a value conflict has concrete benefits. So far, the battlefield of gentrification research has largely navigated around values situated within a capitalist political economy: rent gaps, income, or class struggle. These exist and for a large part determine urban development today. However, a broader conception of the process does not just take a rights-based approach to social conflict, but rather throws open the necessary question of what is, and should be, valuable in any given society. The difference is one where gentrification is seen, not just as an elite profit-making strategy, but also as an imposition of one dominant group's values on those of another—resulting in the constant perturbation of what people need to survive urban life.

Implications

Having summarised the main findings of this research and articulated a more expansive theory of value within gentrification, it is now possible to outline some of the wider theoretical implications of the research project. These pertain to the study of gentrification more specifically, as well as the fields of comparative urbanism, urban political ecology, and subaltern urbanism. Though I have focused my research questions within a particular field (gentrification studies), the research spans several different disciplines and theoretical frameworks. This is inevitable, as the study of material life itself cannot be contained within one field; it collects many different aspects of social, environmental, and political life. Rather than closing the door on these other interests, I have sought to balance between focusing on a specific question—the role of material life in gentrification—and allowing this question to spark reflections on different fields of inquiry. I hope that this effort for balance succeeded somewhat.

There are several ways that this study adds to the research on gentrification as a whole. The main goal of the research was to examine the role of material life of low-income people within gentrification. There is little research that approaches this question directly, though there is some literature on gentrification's effect on community relations, food spaces, environment, health and well-being, and so on (Freeman, 2011; Betancur, 2011; Henson, 2013; Whittle et al., 2015; Huse, 2016; Kern, 2016; Anguelovski, 2015; Anguelovski, 2016b; Pennay *et al.*, 2014; González and Waley, 2013). As such, the study has opened up space to further investigate these complex dynamics. It does so by focusing on the gentrified while still seeking to avoid pain narratives or stigmatising, totalising language. In this way, the study will hopefully add to our knowledge of gentrification's impact on historically marginalised communities and the strategies that they use to resist it. In focusing specifically on foodways as a lens to approach material life, the study also adds to the nascent literature of food gentrification and the growing sub-field of ecological gentrification.

There are three specific ways that this study also expands the study of gentrification to new theoretical grounds. First, by focusing on material life and foodways, I found evidence to show that gentrification may not just impact people's culture or experiences (i.e. phenomenological displacement; Davidson and Lees, 2010) but should be understood to take place through the continuum of life. Here, adding to the literature that identifies the kinds of displacement that occur (Marcuse, 1985; Davidson and Lees, 2005; Davidson, 2009; Elliot-Cooper *et al.*, 2020), I introduced what I call 'life displacement' to describe the way that gentrification pervades and unravels the socio-natures and the meshwork of social reproduction in a community. This concept may further advance the literature on ecological gentrification: recognising the ecological entanglement of communities in urban settings is part of the work of breaking down binaries between nature and society, where it is assumed that somehow inner city spaces are not 'natural' and that the working class, especially in the Global North, is entirely removed from relationships of subsistence.

Second, the research highlighted the central role that civil society (in the Gramscian sense) may play in gentrification. There is little research on this subject, except of course in the ecological gentrification literature, where civil society's

contradictory role in facilitating gentrification has been much discussed (Bunce, 2009; Dooling, 2009; Checker, 2011; Curran & Hamilton, 2012; Hamilton and Curran, 2013; Pearsall, 2013; Rosol, 2012; Rosol, 2013; Draus *et al.*, 2013; Wolch *et al.*, 2014; Pride, 2016). However, research that takes a specifically Gramscian approach to gentrification is still rare (for two exceptions, see Rosol, 2013 and Pride, 2016). Given the expansion of research on gentrification globally, and given civil society's varying composition around the world, this dynamic must be further investigated. For this reason, a Gramscian approach such as the one employed here may be useful for comparative gentrification research going forward.

Third, this is one of the few studies that interrogates the question of value within gentrification at length. How valorisation occurs is an underlying, but rarely explicitly formulated, theme in much of gentrification research, as I showed in Chapter 1. While the empirical research conducted in this study focused on the relationship between material life and value more specifically, it has applications to better understand the role of value in gentrification more generally. My findings highlight that an ambidextrous approach to value can be very productive for studying its transformations, translations, and conflicts through gentrification. Indeed, a more fine-grained analysis of the valorisation process may contribute to a much better understanding of how and when gentrification occurs.

Beyond gentrification studies, this approach to value may add to critical urban theory as a whole. If critical urban theory is to be useful for the effort to develop just alternatives to development, it is important to illustrate how other types of value and wealth are formed and destroyed in urban development processes, such as food cultures, environmental goods, home-making, safety, use of public space, and kinship relations. This is not just a question for the Global South, but is of import everywhere. For urban scholars to challenge—and provide alternatives to—current strategies of urban development will also require going beyond constrictive measurement tools bound only by commodity relations, and narrowing our understanding of life to those commodity relations (cost of housing, cost of food, etc.). Of course, commodities are the dominant way by which many of us engage and survive in the world today. However, restricting our analysis to exchange-value alone is a missed opportunity. Thus, this study aimed to expand urban theory by employing a more ambidextrous

theory of value that has the capacity to see—not just 'use-values'—but a plurality of values and how they interface with capitalist value.

In addition, the study may also be interesting from a comparative urbanism perspective. Several edited volumes and special issues on global gentrification have now been published (Lees *et al.*, 2015; Shin *et al.*, 2016; Albet & Benach, 2017; Cartier, 2017). However, individual studies that involve comparative research on gentrification across North and South contexts are still very few and far between (e.g. Harris, 2008; Díaz-Parra, 2015). This research adds to that effort, showing that in-depth, comparative gentrification work can still yield fruitful, interesting results. Comparative urbanism as a field is still growing, and this study can contribute to this by offering unique frameworks and methods that allow us to compare local dynamics across world regions.

In many ways, the study could be seen as fitting more clearly in the field of urban political ecology. Inspired by this field, I sought to approach urban dynamics in a way that did not collapse nature/society divides and which paid attention to how power distribution shapes urban space. I also heeded the call by Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth to trouble distinctions of rural/urban, and framing urbanisation as a globally interdependent process, rather than focusing on the city as the traditional unit of analysis (2015). By choosing to study gentrification occurring in peri-urban 'villages' in Hanoi, and by focusing on the role of subsistence activity in gentrification in Montreal, I illustrated how the assumed borders between the city and the country, nature and society, are in practice quite blurry. Indeed, my findings showed how 'urbanisation [and gentrification] produces, materially or representationally, spaces understood as urban or rural, or materials understood as natural or social' (Ibid: 25). In this way, the study may add to the field of urban political ecology by demonstrating how the city itself should not be taken as being outside of nature or the countryside, and by illustrating how research could indeed trace those fraught binaries.

In addition, the research is also in line with subaltern urbanism. From how I framed my research to my methods and analysis, I sought to destabilise hierarchies between Western-derived theory and subaltern theory. In each aspect of the research, I interrogated the knowledges that I assumed and the worldview that I projected. There is also something very humbling and jarring—or could I say defamiliarising?—

about talking to 352 people in two countries over the span of 12 months, listening to their stories, trying to make sense of it all. I felt I had to develop a perspective that is able to make sense of these stories in a way that is respectful and does justice to what was being said—and what was left unsaid. The theoretical framework, which integrated subaltern and capitalocentric theories in a compound way, was developed to respond to this need. The methodology of the peripheral perspective may also be useful for others who wish to take a subaltern approach to North-South comparative research. However, I think that the essence of a peripheral perspective is that it must be guided in large part by the experiences themselves and, thus, would not be so easy to replicate in other studies by its very own nature. There is perhaps a sense to which the methods of peripheral, subaltern research must be custom-made.

Lastly, the research may also inform policy-makers and organisers. First, the role of qualitative factors in accelerating gentrification continues to be under-appreciated by municipal governments and urban planners. Municipalities must develop strategies for improving affordability and diversity while avoiding the debate over 'how much' improvement is possible without kick-starting gentrification. The research points to the fact that accessible public space, supporting the means of social reproduction, and protecting spaces frequented by low-income residents can both address inequality and ameliorate gentrification or even catalyse resistance to it. Likewise, the research underlines the role for civil society of supporting material life, with the emphasis that attention needs to be paid to how certain forms of management and regulation can actually limit residents' involvement and stymie autonomous, resident-driven movements for alternative development. More broadly, the research highlights the role that access to public, decommodified space has in making neighbourhoods more affordable, and, when paired with access to housing, ought to be prioritised. It also stresses the importance of privatised spaces and informal occupations have for low income residents, such as cheap diners in Montreal and street vending in Hanoi. Ultimately, however, for policy-makers, activists, or anyone with an interest with addressing gentrification, I hope that this research casts light on what is often considered invisible: the day-to-day strategies that poor people use to stay alive, build bonds, relate to place, and to create alternatives—strategies that must be fostered to, in the words of Eric Clark, make the rent gap theory 'not true' (Clark, 2017).

What brings all of this together is a general interest in how we can think of politics in the current moment. Our urban spaces are being reformatted and developed by what seem to be unstoppable machines of capital investment (Moreno and Shin, 2018). In a world of transnational finance, nationalist resurgence, and global pandemics, day-to-day struggles and everyday realities of the poor often get swept under the rug. But, as this research emphasises, it is through the day-to-day that those with power are legitimised, and those without power can challenge them.

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Appendix A

List of participants in the study (anonymised)

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
1	1	Interview	1	Local official	NA	51-60	M	Hanoi	Chung	anh
2	1	Interview	1	Local shopkeeper	Quang An	41-50	F	Hanoi	My	cô
3	1	Interview	4	Elderly man in the cemetery	Quang An	71-80	M	Hanoi	Hiền	ông
4	1	Interview	1	Elderly resident and vendor	Quang An	71-80	F	Hanoi	Lịch	bà
5	1	Interview	1	Gardener in drained lake	Nhat Tan	61-70	M	Hanoi	Trí	bác
6	1	Interview	5	Elderly peach tree farmer	Nhat Tan	61-70	F	Hanoi	Tính	bác
7	1	Interview	1	Retired professor	NA	61-70	M	Hanoi	Thắng	chú
8	1	Interview	1	Former resident, Tay Ho	NA	51-60	M	Hanoi	Ba	chú
9	2	Interview	1	Young couple, Tay Ho	Thuy Khoe	31-40	M, F	Hanoi	Danh, Hué	anh, chị
10	1	Interview	1	Wife of local official	Bang A	51-60	F	Hanoi	Hằng	cô
11	1	Interview	1	Poor former farmer	Bang A	51-60	F	Hanoi	Tám	cô
12	2	Interview	1	New residents, mothers	Linh Dam NUA	21-30	F, F	Hanoi	Thi and An	chị, chị
13	1	Interview	1	Market, vegetable vendor	Quang An	41-50	F	Hanoi	Liên	cô
14	1	Interview	1	Organic market, vegetable vendor	Quang An	41-50	F	Hanoi	Khanh	cô
15	1	Interview	2	Market, tofu vendor	Quang An	31-40	F	Hanoi	Hà	chị
16	1	Interview	1	Street market, vendor	Quang An	51-60	F	Hanoi	Cam	cô
17	1	Interview	1	Market pastries vendor	Nhat Tan	51-60	F	Hanoi	Lý	bà
18	2	Interview	1	Market fish vendors	Nhat Tan	51-60	F, F	Hanoi	Hồng + Hường	cô, cô
19	1	Interview	1	Market, pickled vegetable vendor	Nhat Tan	51-60	F	Hanoi	Thu	bác
20	1	Interview	1	Market, fish vendor	Nhat Tan	41-50	F	Hanoi	Lê	Chị
21	1	Interview	1	Market, vegetable vendor	Nhat Tan	41-50	F	Hanoi	Mai	bà
22	1	Interview	1	Market, vegetable and honey vendor	Quang An	51-60	F	Hanoi	Ngoan	cô
23	1	Interview	2	Organic garden	Quang An	61-70	F	Hanoi	Đào	bà
24	1	Interview	2	Fisher	Quang An	61-70	M	Hanoi	Tuấn	chú
25	1	Interview	1	Elderly woman gardener	Quang An	71-80	F	Hanoi	Kiệm	bà
26	1	Interview	1	Vendor by temple	Quang An	41-50	F	Hanoi	Thanh	chị
27	1	Interview	1	Vendor by temple	Quang An	41-50	F	Hanoi	Dung	chị
28	1	Interview	1	Peach tree farmer	Phu Thuong	41-50	F	Hanoi	Chinh	chị
29	2	Interview	3	Lower middle class couple	Quang An	41-50	M, F	Hanoi	Đoàn, Hương	em, chị
30	1	Interview	1	Motorbike mechanic	Quang An	31-40	M	Hanoi	Sơn	anh

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
31	2	Interview	3	Couple by the Nhat Tan bridge	Nhat Tan	61-70	F, M	Hanoi	Nga (wife), Hùng (husband)	bác, bác
32	1	Interview	1	Gardener by the Nhat Tan bridge	Phu Thuong	61-70	M	Hanoi	Tùng	ông
33	1	Interview	1	Rich elderly woman	Quang An	71-80	F	Hanoi	Chi	bà
34	1	Interview	1	Elderly woman gardener	Nhat Tan	61-70	F	Hanoi	Lợi	bà
35	1	Interview	1	Shopper at market	Nhat Tan	41-50	F	Hanoi	Trà	cô
36	1	Interview	1	Market, vegetable vendor	Nhat Tan	41-50	F	Hanoi	Bình	chị
37	1	Interview	1	Gardener, younger woman	Nhat Tan	31-40	F	Hanoi	Vui	cô
38	1	Interview	1	Gardener, older woman	Nhat Tan	51-60	F	Hanoi	Tuyết	bà
195	1	Interview	1	Real estate agent	Nam Tu Lien	31-40	M	Hanoi	Đ	anh
39	1	Interview	3	Younger woman in NUA	Nam Tu Lien	31-40	F	Hanoi	Trang	chị
40	1	Interview	1	Elderly man in bookstore café	Nhat Tan	71-80	M	Hanoi	Thức	ông
41	1	Interview	1	Hamlet leader, Linh Dam NUA	Linh Dam	61-70	F	Hanoi	Nhung	bà
42	1	Interview	1	Urban planner	NA	41-50	M	Hanoi	Tân	anh
43	1	Interview	3	Developer	NA	61-70	M	Hanoi	Phương	chú
44	1	Interview	1	Urban planner	NA	51-60	M	Hanoi	Hòa	chú
45	1	Interview	1	Real estate agent	Nhat Tan	21-30	M	Hanoi	Tiến	anh
46	1	Interview	1	Real estate agent	Bang A	41-50	M	Hanoi	Vũ	chú
47	1	Interview	1	Urban planner	NA	41-50	M	Hanoi	Huy	anh
48	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	31-40	M	Hanoi	NA	NA
49	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	51-60	M	Hanoi	NA	NA
50	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	NA	NA
51	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	41-50	M	Hanoi	Tú	anh
52	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	Hoa	chị
53	1	Interview	3	Expert, urban development	NA	31-40	F	Hanoi	Thủy	chị
54	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	61-70	F	Hanoi	Hân	cô
55	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	31-40	M	Hanoi	Chí	anh
56	4	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	NA	M	Hanoi	Mạnh	anh
57	1	Interview	2	Researcher	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	NA	NA
58	3	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	NA	M, F, F	Hanoi	NA	NA
59	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	NA	NA
60	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	31-40	F	Hanoi	NA	NA
61	1	Interview	1	Expert, urban development	NA	41-50	M	Hanoi	Duy	anh
62	1	Interview	1	Researcher	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	Lê	NA
63	1	Interview	1	Civil society	NA	41-50	F	Hanoi	Hoàng	anh
64	2	Interview	1	Civil society	NA	31-40	M, F	Hanoi	Đại, Đề	anh, chị
65	NA	Event	NA	Event on peri-urban agriculture	NA	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
66	1	Interview	2	Young couple, Linh Dam	Linh Dam NUA	NA	F, M	Hanoi	Thương, Nam	chị, anh
67	NA	Event	NA	Event on urban food	NA	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
				security, Hanoi						
68	NA	Event	NA	Event on urban food security, Hanoi	NA	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
69	NA	Event	NA	Visit to Times City	Times City	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
70	NA	Event	NA	Visit to Ecopark	Ecopark	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
71	1	Interview	1	Official, Department of Trade	NA	31-40	M	Hanoi	NA	NA
72	60	Survey	60	Surveys	Nhat Tan	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
73	NA	Event	NA	Public event, including feedback from audience	NA	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
74	7	Meeting	1	Focus group of 7 peach farmers	Phu Thuong	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
75	6	Meeting	1	Focus group of 6 hamlet leaders and local officials	Nhat Tan	NA	NA	Hanoi	NA	NA
76	1	Interview	1	Man living on floodplains, Red River	Tu Lien	51-60	M	Hanoi	Hoan	chú
77	1	Interview	1	Gardener	Phu Thuong	51-60	F	Hanoi	Thuận	Ông
78	2	Interview	1	Elderly couple	Phu Thuong	61-70	M, F	Hanoi	Nga (wife) + Hùng (husband)	bác
79	1	Interview	1	Sticky rice vendor	Quan An	31-40	F	Hanoi	Thương	chị
80	1	Interview	1	Resident, Vinh Home Riverside	Vinh Home Riverside	41-50	M	Hanoi	Thọ	Anh
81	1	Interview	3	Elderly migrant vendor	Tu Lien	81-90	F	Hanoi	Lụa	cô
82	NA	Event	NA	Event on urban development	NA	NA	NA	Hanoi	Bền	bà
83	1	Interview	1	Hamlet leader	Linh Dam NUA	51-60	M	Hanoi	Bằng	Ông
84	1	Interview	1	Gardener	Linh Dam NUA	81-90	F	Hanoi	Lan	Bà
85	2	Interview	1	Young couple	Linh Dam NUA	31-40	F	Hanoi	Minh Anh (wife) + Luan (husband)	anh + chị
193	1	Interview	1	Vegetable vendor, migrant	Phu Thuong	51-60	F	Hanoi	Tuan	chị
86	1	Interview	1	Resident	Phu Thuong	31-40	M	Hanoi	Độ	anh
87	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	31-40	F	Montreal	Cristina	NA
88	1	Interview	1	Civil society	NDG	31-40	M	Montreal	Greg	NA
89	2	Interview	1	Civil society	NDG	18-25	F, M	Montreal	Allison, Lei	NA
90	NA	Event	NA	Community event	NDG	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
91	1	Interview	1	Municipal administration worker	NDG	61-70	M	Montreal	George	NA
92	1	Interview	1	Director, community group	NDG	61-70	M	Montreal	Dan	NA
93	3	Interview	1	Civil society	NDG	NA	NA	Montreal	Justin, Amelia, Greg	NA
94	2	Interview	1	Civil society, Youth centre	NDG	NA	N	Montreal	Sydney, Angela	NA
95	8	Meeting	1	Civil society, food sector	NDG	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
96	1	Interview	1	Service worker, café	NDG	31-40	F	Montreal	Jenny	NA

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
97	1	Interview	1	Service worker, fast food	NDG	31-40	M	Montreal	Adil	NA
98	1	Interview	1	Service worker, supermarket	NDG	51-60	F	Montreal	Genevieve	NA
99	1	Interview	1	Owner, cooperative	NDG	41-50	M	Montreal	Jordan	NA
100	1	Interview	1	Service worker, dépanneur	Saint-Raymond	51-60	F	Montreal	NA	NA
101	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Joanna	NA
102	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	30-40	F	Montreal	Marie	NA
103	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Melanie	NA
104	12	Meeting	1	Focus group of 12 elderly residents	NDG	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
105	2	Interview	1	Two elderly men sitting on porch	Saint-Raymond	51-60, 61, 70	M, M	Montreal	Ed, Andy	NA
106	1	Interview	1	Owner, supermarket	Saint-Raymond	61-70	F	Montreal	Eleonora	NA
107	1	Interview	1	Owner, restaurant	Saint-Raymond	51-60	M	Montreal	Giorgio	NA
108	2	Interview	1	Service worker, store	Saint-Raymond	51-60, 41-50	F, F	Montreal	Anna, Tara	NA
109	2	Interview	1	Service worker, bakery	Saint-Raymond	31-40	F	Montreal	Francesca	NA
110	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Dimitra	NA
111	1	Interview	1	Participant, grocery visit	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Zofia	NA
112	1	Interview	1	Participant, grocery visit	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Martina	NA
113	1	Interview	1	Participant, grocery visit	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Vittoria	NA
114	1	Interview	1	Participant, grocery visit	NDG	71-80	F	Montreal	Eleanor	NA
115	1	Interview	1	Participant, grocery visit	NDG	61-70	M	Montreal	Mike	NA
116	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	51-60	F	Montreal	Amelie	NA
117	1	Interview	1	Customer, McDonalds	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Rebecca	NA
118	1	Interview	1	Customer, McDonalds	NDG	61-70	M	Montreal	John	NA
119	5	Interview	1	Senior centre	NDG	61-70	F	Montreal	Kate, Sally, Pauline, Nancy, Barb	NA
120	1	Interview	1	City councillor	NDG	51-60	M	Montreal	Tom	NA
121	1	Interview	1	Real estate agent	NDG	51-60	M	Montreal	Jean	NA
122	1	Interview	1	Resident, activist	Saint-Henri	31-40	N	Montreal	Brooke	NA
123	1	Interview	1	Civil society, tenant rights	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Helene	NA
124	1	Guided tour	1	Resident, activist	Little Burgundy	31-40	F	Montreal	Fatima	NA
125	1	Interview	1	Civil society	Little Burgundy	41-50	F	Montreal	Bianca	NA
126	1	Interview	1	Civil society, food sector	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Jane	NA
127	1	Interview	1	Civil society, food sector	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Irene	NA
128	3	Interview	3	Historical society	Saint-Henri	NA	M, M, F	Montreal	Sid, Jacques, Veronique	NA
129	1	Interview	1	Civil society	Saint-Henri	31-40	F	Montreal	Emma	NA
130	1	Interview	1	Civil society, community garden	Saint-Henri	30-45	M	Montreal	Guillaume	NA
131	1	Interview	1	President, community garden	Saint-Henri	71-80	F	Montreal	Anne-Marie	NA

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
132	1	Interview	1	New resident	Saint-Henri	31-40	F	Montreal	Adèle	NA
133	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Emily	NA
134	1	Interview	1	New resident	Saint-Henri	31-40	F	Montreal	Chloe	NA
135	1	Interview	1	New resident	Saint-Henri	31-40	M	Montreal	James	NA
136	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	Denis	NA
137	2	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70, 61-70	F, F	Montreal	Sylvie, Virginie	NA
138	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70	M	Montreal	Marcel	NA
139	5	Interview	1	Residents, communal house	Saint-Henri	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
140	1	Interview	3	Resident	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Michelle	NA
141	4	Interview	1	Elderly residents, senior residence	Saint-Henri	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
142	3	Interview	1	Elderly residents, senior residence	Saint-Henri	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
143	1	Interview	1	Resident, landlord	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Louise	NA
144	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70	F	Montreal	Katherine	NA
145	1	Interview	1	Resident, landlord	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	Harold	NA
146	1	Interview	2	Resident	Saint-Henri	71-80	F	Montreal	Agnes	NA
147	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Heloise	NA
148	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	Roberto	NA
149	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Agathe	NA
150	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	81-90	F	Montreal	Peggy	NA
151	1	Interview	1	Owner, restaurant	Saint-Henri	31-40	M	Montreal	Oscar	NA
152	1	Interview	1	Service worker, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	31-40	M	Montreal	Moe	NA
153	1	Interview	1	Owner, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Aisha	NA
154	1	Interview	1	Owner, grocery store	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Nancy	NA
155	1	Interview	1	Service worker, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	31-40	F	Montreal	Nina	NA
156	1	Interview	1	Service worker, diner	Saint-Henri	51-60	F	Montreal	Diane	NA
157	1	Interview	1	Service worker, store	Saint-Henri	21-30	M	Montreal	Kahlil	NA
158	1	Interview	1	Owner, dépanneur	Little Burgundy	51-60	M	Montreal	Jamal	NA
159	1	Interview	1	Owner, restaurant	Saint-Henri	31-40	M	Montreal	Gustavo	NA
160	1	Interview	1	Owner, store	Saint-Henri	31-40	F	Montreal	Beatrice	NA
161	2	Interview	2	Service worker, store	Saint-Henri	NA	F, F	Montreal	NA	NA
162	1	Interview	1	Politician	Saint-Henri	35-45	M	Montreal	Sam	NA
163	4	Interview	1	Residents	Saint-Henri	NA	F, F, F, F	Montreal	NA	NA
164	1	Interview	1	Civil society, social worker	Saint-Raymond	40-50	F	Montreal	Lorraine	NA
165	1	Interview	1	Civil society, social worker	NDG	40-50	M	Montreal	Matt	NA
166	1	Interview	1	Gallery	Saint-Henri	35-45	M	Montreal	NA	NA
167	1	Interview	1	Resident	NDG	60-70	F	Montreal	Kate	NA
168	2	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	NA	F, F	Montreal	NA	NA
169	1	Event	NA	Protest	Saint-Henri	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
170	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	71-80	F	Montreal	Elodie	NA
171	1	Guided	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	40-50	M	Montreal	Jacques	NA

Code	Number of participants	Event type	Number of interviews	Description	Ward/Neighbourhood	Age	Gender	City	Anonymized name(s)	Honorific(s)
		tour								
172	1	Interview	1	Owner, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	NA	NA
173	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70	M	Montreal	NA	NA
174	1	Interview	1	Resident, cooperative	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	NA	NA
175	1	Interview	1	Resident, senior housing	Saint-Henri	61-70	F	Montreal	Melodie	NA
176	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70	M	Montreal	NA	NA
177	1	Interview	1	Owner, high-end restaurant	Saint-Henri	31-40	M	Montreal	NA	NA
178	4	Interview	1	Residents, collective house	Saint-Henri	21-30	F, M, M, M	Montreal	NA	NA
179	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	41-50	M	Montreal	NA	NA
180	1	Interview	1	Resident, senior housing	Saint-Henri	71-80	F	Montreal	NA	NA
181	1	Interview	1	Service worker, restaurant	Saint-Raymond	31-40	M	Montreal	NA	NA
182	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Raymond	71-80	F	Montreal	NA	NA
183	1	Interview	1	Service worker, restaurant	Saint-Raymond	NA	M	Montreal	NA	NA
184	2	Interview	1	Owner, diner	NDG	41-50	M, F	Montreal	NA	NA
185	1	Interview	1	Resident, informal worker	Saint-Henri	41-50	M	Montreal	Bob	NA
186	1	Interview	1	Service worker, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	41-50	M	Montreal	NA	NA
187	1	Interview	1	Resident, urban garden president	Saint-Henri	51-60	M	Montreal	Jay	NA
188	18	Public event	1	Public event, including feedback from audience	NA	NA	NA	Montreal	NA	NA
189	1	Interview	1	Resident, displaced from Saint-Henri	Lachine	51-60	M	Montreal	Bjorn	NA
190	1	Interview	1	Resident	Saint-Henri	61-70	F	Montreal	Isabelle	NA
191	5	Interview	1	Residents	Saint-Henri	NA	M	Montreal	NA	NA
192	1	Interview	1	Owner, dépanneur	Saint-Henri	41-50	F	Montreal	Kim	NA
194	20	Public event	1	Public event and workshop	Barcelona	NA	NA	Barcelona	NA	NA

Appendix B

Information sheet on the study given to organizations and individuals

The effect of urban development on food access and resilience of low-income residents

Research project summary

Primary Investigator	Supervisors		
Aaron Vansintjan MPhil, Birkbeck-UL avansintjan@gmail.com	Isabelle Anguelovski ICTA-UAB isabelle.anguelovski@uab.cat	Rosie Cox Birkbeck-UL r.cox@bbk.ac.uk	Joel McKim Birkbeck-UL j.mckim@bbk.ac.uk

In the coming decades, municipal governments seeking to ensure just, sustainable, and accessible cities will be faced with key challenges:

- Increasing food insecurity in cities due to unstable food supply and climate change
- Urban population growth and migration
- Rapid urban development and rising gentrification, often displacing low-income residents

Urban low-income residents often rely heavily on:

- Low-cost grocery stores, community gardens, food banks
- Social networks and accessible community spaces
- Informal economies and alternative food systems

Understanding how urban development processes affect these services will be crucial for guaranteeing accessible cities for low-income populations in the coming decades.

This study will research how urban development affects sites of food access for marginalized communities in the neighbourhood of Tay Ho, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Methodologies to be used in this study:

- Review of news media, legislative documents, and reports to identify key actors and processes
- Analysis of demographic trends via census reports
- Semi-structured interviews of community leaders, developers, planners, and local politicians
- Targeted questionnaires of low-income and historically-marginalized residents using food spaces
- Participant observation at food spaces

Objectives of the study:

- To understand how communities use non-monetary resources, and how these are affected by development processes
- To identify urban development policy strategies that can ensure community resilience and take into account the essential services that low-income communities rely on

Appendix C

Interview guide

Interview steps

- Explain the project to the participant, and explain what the information will be used for.
- Explain the consent form. Inform the participant that they do not have to respond to all questions. Explain that the answers they provide will remain confidential, only used for the purpose of the research project. Explain that their name will also not be used within the study, and that their signature will not be linked to the recorded data. Ask if they agree with being recorded with audio equipment.
- Ask the respondent to sign the consent form if they agree to all the above, and start the interview.
- After the interview, provide further contact details of the principal investigator to the participant.

General interview questions

- What places do low-income people go for their food?
- What types of activities take place in those sites – in addition to food shopping or consumption?
- Are there any places that people use for more than just getting food, but also as social spaces?
- What community organizations distribute food? How are these spaces run? What is important about them, why are they valuable to the community? How has their role changed through time?
- What is the role of community organizations in trying to secure access to traditional food shopping and consumption options? What type of work have they developed? How do you perceive their involvement in trying to address residents' concerns?
- How have recent real estate or construction projects affected access to these places?
- How have politicians responded to the changes in access to food spaces resulting from development projects? -Developers? Community groups? Activists? Residents?
- How have planners or local officials addressed issues of displacement resulting from development projects?
- Who else should I interview, and could you put me in contact with them?

Interview questions for residents

- Could you walk me through the different places you get your food regularly, and why?
- What types of activities take place in those sites – in addition to food shopping or consumption?
- Are there any places that people use for more than just getting food, but also as social spaces?
- What is your perception of the recent real estate or construction projects in the neighbourhood, and how have they affected you?
- What do you like about your neighbourhood? What are the benefits of living here?
- Who else should I interview, and could you put me in contact with them?

Interview questions for politicians, public officials, and planners

- What is your opinion of the recent real estate and construction projects within the neighbourhood?
- What has been your role in facilitating or helping to realize recent real estate and construction projects within the neighbourhood?
- What community organizations do you know of that support local low-income people?

- Do you consult with these organizations when planning development within the neighbourhood?
- Are there any places that people use for more than just getting food, but also as social spaces?
- How have recent real estate or construction projects affected access to these places?
- How have you responded to the changes in access to food spaces resulting from development projects?
- Have you considered, and how have you tried to address, issues of displacement resulting from development projects?
- Who else should I interview, and could you put me in contact with them?

Interview questions for community organizers

- What are your perceptions of how people access food in the neighbourhood, and how these have changed?
- How have developers and politicians worked together during development projects?
- Have you worked with them on these projects, and how?
- What have some of the challenges been in working with politicians and developers?
- What has the effect of the new developments, such as real estate projects or construction sites, been on your community? How have you organized to meet these challenges?
- How do property rights or zoning laws affect recent changes in the neighbourhood and the lives of residents, and how have they changed in the last few years? What are the strategies of residents and supporters around them to address any negative effects of recent development projects?
- Who have some of the key actors engaged with development projects, real estate, and community organizing, and what has been their role?

Interview questions for developers

- Could you summarize your main strategy and projects in the neighbourhood?
- What is appealing about developing in this neighbourhood?
- What are some of the difficulties in achieving your project?
- How have you navigated legal property rights? Have these changed recently to better allow you to complete your project?
- What, according to you, are some positive or negative impacts to neighbourhood residents of your development project?
- Have you worked with any community groups to address these impacts?
- Do you have any formal agreements with local and/or municipal politicians for minimizing whatever negative effects the project might result in?
- Have you met any push-back from local community or politicians in regard to your development project? If yes, how do you perceive this resistance/push-back? What has your been reaction to it?

Appendix D

Questionnaires used in the study

Hanoi questionnaire (English)

The effect of urban development on food access and resilience of low-income residents

Questionnaire for residents - English

Primary Investigator	Supervisors		
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The aim of this study is to understand how urban development affects the places where low-income residents get their food. This requires interviews of participants and the collection of questionnaires to understand the perspectives of residents and users of community food spaces.
Participation is anonymous and voluntary, and you are free to skip any question. Your participation will have no effect on your life, and everything will remain confidential.
The research will be available as a report to local NGOs, which will be made public. The information will be used for my thesis and may also be used in other analyses that I write, such as journal articles, commentary pieces, or policy briefs.

General information

_____ Male / Female
_____ Single / Married / Other
_____ How long have you lived/worked here?

Do you identify with any of the below?

- Single mother
- Senior (65+)
- Ethnic minority
- Student
- Migrant worker
- Health problems
- Other _____

_____ How many people live in your household?
_____ How many children do you support?

Neighbourhood

Why did you choose to rent/work/live here? (Question for migrant workers and students)

Have you sold or rented a part of your land? (Question for residents)
-If so, were there any disadvantages?
-If not, why not?

_____ Do you have a fixed source of income?

What are your household expenses in a month?
_____ Gas (cooking)
_____ Transport (Gas, public transport, etc)
_____ Medical
_____ Tuition
_____ Food
_____ Water, electricity, cable, internet, phone
_____ Loans (bank or family)
_____ Business expenses

Where are you from?
_____

If you were offered another place to live outside this ward, would you do it? (Question for residents)
(Food access / education / friends / family)

What is your favorite thing about this village/neighbourhood?

What is bad about this place?
Why do you still live here?
(Environment / people / culture)

Please list some changes you've noticed in the neighbourhood since you've started living here. Construction/roads/people/house price/convenience stores/amount of street vendors/ponds/fields/new residents

Do you think changes are positive or negative? Explain.

Food

On average, how much does your household spend on food per day/week/month? _____

Do you engage in any of the following, if so, how often? (week/month/year)
_____ Vegetable gardening
_____ Keep poultry
_____ Go fishing
_____ Cooking with others / meal-sharing
_____ Wholesale food purchasing
_____ Buy food on credit
_____ Local festivals
Other _____

Do you garden? Why or why not?
(Fun/safe food/save money/land availability/other)

Where do you get your food? (Percent)
_____ Covered market
_____ Convenience store
_____ Supermarket
_____ Wet market / uncovered market
_____Street vendor
_____ Garden
_____ Neighbours, family, or friends
Other _____

How have the places where you buy food changed in the last ten years? (Prompt with events)
-More street vendors
-New convenience stores
-Construction of new market
-Lac long quan road
-Resettlement buildings

What are your concerns regarding food?
(Price/freshness/safety/origin)

Are there any kinds of food that you want to get but you can't (Safe/clean/higher quality/seafood/meat/imported food)

Hanoi questionnaire (Vietnamese)

Tác động của phát triển đô thị lên cách thức tiếp cận và sử dụng thực phẩm và khả năng chống chịu của người dân có thu nhập thấp

Bảng hỏi cho người dân

Nghiên cứu viên chính

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Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là nhằm tìm hiểu về ảnh hưởng của các dự án phát triển đô thị lên những nơi mà người dân có thu nhập thấp mua hoặc lấy thức ăn. Nghiên cứu cần phỏng vấn và khảo sát để hiểu về góc nhìn của người dân và những người sử dụng không gian công cộng liên quan đến thực phẩm.
Việc tham gia được giữ kín danh tính và hoàn toàn tự nguyện, bạn có quyền bỏ qua câu hỏi nào bạn muốn. Việc bạn tham gia sẽ không ảnh hưởng gì đến cuộc sống của bạn, và mọi điều bạn chia sẻ sẽ được giữ kín.
Nghiên cứu này sẽ được dùng làm báo cáo cho các tổ chức phi chính phủ tại địa phương và được công bố. Tôi sẽ sử dụng thông tin để viết luận văn và có thể viết các bài phân tích khác như bài báo đăng tạp chí, bài bình luận, hoặc bản tóm tắt chính sách.

Thông tin chung

1. Thông tin cá nhân
_____ Nam/Nữ
_____ Độc thân/Kết hôn/Khác
_____ Bạn đã sống/làm việc ở đây bao lâu rồi?
_____ Quê gốc bạn ở đâu?

2. Nhóm yếu thế
Bạn có thuộc một trong các nhóm sau không?
- Mẹ đơn thân
- Người già (65 tuổi trở lên)
- Người dân tộc thiểu số
- Sinh viên
- Lao động di cư
- Có vấn đề sức khỏe
- Khác _____

3. Gia đình
_____ Có bao nhiêu người sống trong hộ gia đình?
_____ Bạn phải nuôi bao nhiêu trẻ?
_____ Bạn có nguồn thu nhập ổn định không?

4. Chi tiêu trong gia đình
Gia đình bạn một tháng chi bao nhiêu cho những khoản sau?
_____ Tiền ga
_____ Tiền thuốc men
_____ Tiền học phí
_____ Tiền thức ăn
_____ Tiền điện, nước, truyền hình cáp, Internet, điện thoại
_____ Tiền trả nợ (ngân hàng hoặc người thân)
_____ Tiền kinh doanh

Khu dân cư

1. Câu hỏi cho lao động di cư và sinh viên: Tại sao bạn chọn thuê nhà/làm việc/sống ở khu này?

2. Câu hỏi cho người dân: Bạn có từng bán hay cho thuê một phần đất của mình không?
- Nếu có, có điều gì bạn không thích sau khi bán/cho thuê đất không?
- Nếu không, tại sao bạn không bán/cho thuê đất?

3. Câu hỏi cho người dân: Nếu bạn được mời đến ở một nơi khác, không ở trong quận này, bạn có đi không?
(thực phẩm/giáo dục/bạn bè/họ hàng)

4. Bạn thích nhất điều gì về làng/khu dân cư này?
(môi trường/con người/văn hóa)

5. Hãy nêu một số thay đổi bạn nhận thấy trong khu vực này kể từ khi bạn sống ở đây.
(công trình xây dựng/đường xá/con người/giá đất/cửa hàng tiện ích/số người bán rong/ao hồ/ruộng vườn/cư dân mới từ nơi khác chuyển đến)

6. Bạn nghĩ rằng thay đổi đó tích cực hay tiêu cực? Giải thích.

Thực phẩm

1. Trung bình, mỗi ngày/tuần/tháng, gia đình bạn chi bao nhiêu tiền cho thức ăn?

2. Bạn có làm những hoạt động sau không? Nếu có thì bao nhiêu lần một tuần/tháng/năm?

_____ Trồng rau
_____ Nuôi gia cầm
_____ Câu cá
_____ Nấu ăn chung/Ăn chung với người khác
_____ Mua thức ăn số lượng lớn (mua buôn)
_____ Mua chịu thức ăn
_____ Lễ hội tại địa phương
_____ Khác (nêu rõ)

3. Nếu có trồng rau thì lý do là gì? (Cho vui/khỏe người/rau sạch/tiết kiệm tiền/có sẵn đất/khác)

4. Thức ăn hàng ngày của bạn đến từ nguồn nào? (Phần trăm)
_____ Chợ có mái che
_____ Cửa hàng tiện ích
_____ Siêu thị
_____ Chợ tạm
_____ Vườn
_____ Người thân, bạn bè, hàng xóm
_____ Khác (nêu rõ)

5. Những nơi bạn mua thức ăn đã thay đổi ra sao trong 10 năm qua? (gợi ý các mốc sự kiện sau)
- Có nhiều người bán rong hơn
- Các cửa hàng tiện ích mọc lên
- Xây chợ mới
- Xây đường mới, như đường Lạc Long Quân, đường quanh hồ
- Nhà tái định cư

6. Bạn có lo ngại gì về thức ăn không? (giá cả/độ tươi/an toàn/nguồn gốc)

7. Có loại thực phẩm nào bạn muốn ăn nhưng không có điều kiện không? (thực phẩm sạch/an toàn/chất lượng cao/hải sản/đồ ăn nhập khẩu/thịt)

Montreal questionnaire (English)

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The aim of this study is to understand how urban development projects affect the places where low-income residents get their food. This requires interviews of participants and the collection of questionnaires to understand the perspectives of residents and users of community food spaces.
The research will be available as a report to local NGOs, which will be made public. The information will be used for my thesis and may also be used in other analyses that I write, such as journal articles, commentary pieces, or policy briefs. Participation is anonymous and voluntary, and you are free to skip any question. Your participation will have no effect on the services you receive, and everything will remain confidential.

_____ Male / Female / Other
_____ Single / Married / Other
_____ How long have you lived/worked here?

Do you identify with any of the below?

- Single parent
- Senior (65+)
- Ethnic minority
- Student
- Undocumented migrant
- Health problems
- Other _____

_____ How many people live in your household?
_____ How many children do you support?
_____ What is your source of income?
_____ Where do you currently live?

What are your household expenses in a month?
_____ Transportation
_____ Medical
_____ Tuition
_____ Food
_____ Rent + Utilities (electricity, heating)
_____ Cable, internet, phone
_____ Loans (bank or family)

If you were offered another place to live/work outside this neighbourhood, would you do it?
(Food access / education / friends / family)

_____
_____

What are the places that you get your food?

_____
_____

How have the places where you buy food changed in the last ten years? (Prompt with events)

_____
_____

Please list some changes you've noticed in the neighbourhood since you've started living here.
Construction/roads/people/house price/land use

_____
_____

Do you think changes are positive or negative? Explain.

_____
_____

Do you engage in any of the following, if so, how often? (week/month/year)
_____ Vegetable gardening
_____ Cooking with others / meal-sharing
_____ Wholesale food purchasing
_____ Buy food on credit
_____ Family (wedding / birthdays) / community events
_____ Eating/drinking out with friends
Other

_____

How have these activities been affected by recent changes in the neighbourhood?

_____
_____

Notes

_____
_____
_____
_____

Montreal questionnaire (French)

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L'objectif de cette étude est de comprendre comment la gentrification affecte les lieux où les résidents aux bas revenus se ravitaillent en nourriture. Cela implique la réalisation de 'micro-trottoir' pour apprécier le point de vue des résidents et usagers d'espaces communautaires proposant de la nourriture. Les informations recueillies seront utilisées dans mon travail dirigé et pourront être également utilisées dans d'autres publications. La participation est anonyme et volontaire et vous êtes libres de sauter des questions. Votre participation n'aura aucune répercussion sur les services que vous recevez et tout sera gardé confidentiel. Merci de signer le formulaire de consentement si vous acceptez d'être enregistré.

_____ Homme / Femme / Autre
_____ Célibataire / Marié(e) / Autre
_____ Depuis combien de temps vivez/travaillez-vous dans le quartier ?

Comment vous identifiez-vous ?
o Parent célibataire
o Personne âgée (65+)
o Minorité ethnique
o Étudiant(e)
o Sans-papier
o Ayant des problèmes de santé
o Autre _____

_____ Combien êtes-vous dans votre ménage ?
_____ Combien d'enfant avez-vous à charge ?
_____ Quel est votre source de revenu ?
_____ Où habitez-vous en ce moment ?

Combien votre ménage dépense-t-il par mois pour ?
_____ Transport
_____ Soins médicaux
_____ Frais de scolarité
_____ Nourriture
_____ Loyer + charges (Eau, électricité)
_____ Câble, internet, téléphone
_____ Prêts (bancaire ou familiaux)

Si l'on vous proposait un endroit, en dehors du quartier, pour y vivre/travailler, accepteriez-vous ? (Accès à l'offre alimentaire / école / amis / famille)

Où allez-vous acheter votre nourriture ?

De quelle manière ont évolué les lieux où vous allez acheter votre nourriture ? (Très rapidement sur les évènements)

Merci de noter les changements que vous avez remarqué depuis que vous avez emménagé. Construction / rues / gens / prix des maisons / utilisation du sol.

Pensez-vous que les changements sont positifs ou négatifs ? Expliquez.

Prenez-vous part à ses activités, si oui, à quelle fréquence ? (semaine/mois/année)
_____ Culture de potager
_____ Cuisine avec d'autres / partage de repas
_____ Achat en gros de nourriture
_____ Achat de la nourriture à crédit
_____ Évènements familiaux et de la vie en général
_____ Manger et boire avec des amis
Autre _____

Ces activités ont-elles été affectées de quelque manière par les récents changements dans le quartier ?

Notes

Appendix E

Urban qualitative methods workshop description and schedule

Title: Urbanization and city life stories - Qualitative methods workshop
National University of Civil Engineering
Aaron Vansintjan and Nguyen Hong Van
Birkbeck, University of London

Hanoi is seeing many simultaneous changes, from rapid urban development and the loss of agricultural land to increasing environmental issues such as safe food, pollution, and clean water. In this workshop, students will learn about how these changes may affect low-income urban resident's livelihoods and how people respond to these challenges. Students will also have the chance to learn about qualitative survey methodologies and how to do multi-media research methods. Finally, students will also learn how to present qualitative research to the broader public.

Schedule

Session 1. Friday, March 3, 2017 – Introduction to urban food studies and qualitative methods
Students will learn about how the issues of urban development and environmental issues connect, with a focus on food security. We will also discuss qualitative research methods, including photography, and how to conduct qualitative research in an urban context. Finally, students will participate in an interactive workshop on doing qualitative surveys.
TASK: Read references 1 & 2 before the session.

8:00 – Introduction to urban development and food studies (Lecture)
10:30 – Introduction to qualitative research methods, ethics, and how to do multi-media research. (Lecture)
12:00 – Lunch
14:00 – Introduce study site and field research (Lecture)
14:00 – Interactive workshop on collecting survey responses (Workshop)

Session 2. Saturday, March 4, 2017 - Survey
Students will spend the day conducting surveys, and are expected to take photos of their survey site. The whole group will meet twice during the day for questions and feedback. Students are asked to bring a camera or smartphone and appropriate clothing (not too formal, comfortable, rainjacket if necessary).
TASK: By 9PM on Sunday, March 5th, each survey team must email their favorite 2 photos to the instructors.

8:00 – Meet instructors in Tay Ho

12:00 – Lunch, questions, and feedback
16:00 – Meet instructors in Tay Ho for questions and feedback
19:00 – Dinner (individual)
21:00 – Finish survey research, drop off materials with instructors

Session 3. Monday, March 6, 2017 – Data analysis and presenting your research to the public
Students will learn to how to analyze and present qualitative data. Following this, students will participate in a hands-on exercise on how to present your research to the public. By the end of the session, students will be familiar with different ways to present research to the public, for example, newspaper commentary pieces, policy briefs, and public exhibitions. Students may bring their laptops.
TASK: Read reference 3 before the session.

8:00 – Each student survey team presents their 2 favorite photos.
8:45 – Introduction to qualitative data analysis (Lecture)
9:30 – Data coding, analysis, and presentation (Workshop)
12:00 – Lunch
14:00 – How to present your research to the public (Lecture)
15:00 – Presenting your research to the public (Workshop)
17:00 – Discussion and feedback

Appendix F

Certificate of introduction - Hanoi

CIAT is a CGIAR Center

CIAT
International Center for Tropical Agriculture
Since 1967 Science to cultivate change

Certificate of Introduction for CIAT researchers

This document is to introduce Mr. Aaron Vansintjan and Ms. Hong Van Nguyen and to ask for your kind assistance to enable them to undertake their fieldwork in Hanoi.

Mr. Aaron Vansintjan is a doctoral researcher based in London, United Kingdom and is a visiting researcher at CIAT-Asia for the next 5 months. Ms. Hong Van Nguyen is based in Hanoi and is assisting him in his research project. They are studying the effect of urban development on the food access of low-income urban residents in Tay Ho, Hanoi. Their work will contribute to CIAT's wider goal of investigating food systems and sustainable food value chains in South-East Asia, and we believe that it is relevant for them to study the district of Tay Ho, Hanoi, as well as other neighbourhoods for the purpose of comparative study.

We appreciate your support for facilitating their field access and access to archival documents over the period of ***November 2016 to April 2017***.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Dindo Campilan
Director for Asia, CIAT

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Thư giới thiệu cho nghiên cứu viên của CIAT

Thư này nhằm giới thiệu anh Aaron Vansintjan và chị Nguyễn Hồng Vân và mong được sự hỗ trợ của ông/bà trong công tác thu thập dữ liệu nghiên cứu của họ tại Hà Nội.

Anh Aaron Vansintjan là nghiên cứu sinh tại London, Vương Quốc Anh và hiện là nghiên cứu viên ngắn hạn tại CIAT Khu vực Châu Á trong 5 tháng. Chị Nguyễn Hồng Vân làm việc tại Hà Nội và hiện là trợ lý cho nghiên cứu này. Nghiên cứu nhằm tìm hiểu tác động của phát triển đô thị lên cách thức tiếp cận và sử dụng thực phẩm của người dân có thu nhập thấp ở Tây Hồ, Hà Nội. Nghiên cứu này sẽ đóng góp vào mục tiêu lớn hơn của CIAT là điều tra về các hệ thống thực phẩm và các chuỗi giá trị thực phẩm bền vững ở Đông Nam Á, và chúng tôi tin rằng việc khảo sát ở quận Tây Hồ, Hà Nội, cũng như các khu dân cư khác để phục vụ mục đích so sánh sẽ mang lại những hiểu biết giá trị.

Chúng tôi rất trân trọng sự hỗ trợ của ông/bà dành cho anh Aaron Vansintjan và chị Nguyễn Hồng Vân trong việc thu thập dữ liệu và tiếp cận các tài liệu lưu trữ trong khoảng thời gian ***từ tháng 11 năm 2016 đến tháng 4 năm 2017.***

Xin cám ơn sự hợp tác của ông/bà.

Kính thư,

Tiến sĩ Dindo Campilan
Giám đốc CIAT Asia

Nếu ông/bà cần thêm thông tin, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chị Hoàng Thu Thảo, Chánh văn phòng CIAT, Khu vực Châu Á.
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Appendix G

Chronology of land laws and political economic changes in Hanoi

Pre-1887	Feudal land ownership, paired with household production.
1887-1945	High land concentration as a result of French colonisation, low household production.
1945-1986	Land reform and collectivisation. Agricultural cooperatives manage farmland while at the village level land is distributed to each household according to need.
1986	Sixth Congress of the Communist Party initiated era of Đổi Mới reform, recognising the need to formalise multiple sectors of the economy beyond heavy industry, making the way for formalising sale of land and private businesses.
1988	Change in the laws pertaining to land. Private individuals are given the legal right to set up businesses, and agriculture is further decollectivised. Land continues to belong to the state. No compensation for land expropriation is mentioned.
1992	Revision of constitution.
1993	First land law, replacing 1988 law: buying and selling land-use rights is legalised, and the government develops metrics for the amount of compensation for expropriation of land, tied to location, infrastructure, and, for farmland, the equivalence in profits from future rice production.
1995	Addition of Tay Ho district to Hanoi province (total of 5 districts and doubling of total surface area from 37 km^2 to 67.25km^2)
1997	Financial crash Addition of two more districts, surface area now 82km^2.
1998	Revision of Land Law
2003	Addition of two more districts to the western area, facilitating urban expansion. Surface area of Hanoi municipality is now doubled once again, to 180,000km^2.
2004	Revision of Land Law. Formalisation of different kinds of compensation when the state expropriates land for 'public benefit', e.g. non-agricultural land, cemeteries.
2007	Revision of Land Law: facilitated appropriation of land by local administration without central planning approval
2009	Addition of one more district to the west of Hanoi, Ha Dong province. Surface area of Hanoi municipality is now 220,000km^2.
2010	Financial crash, leaving many real estate investments stranded and planned developments incomplete.
2015	Revision of Land Law: Allowed foreigners to buy and sell land-use rights

Collected from Tran, 2010; Labbé, 2013; Wells-Dang et al., 2015; Fanchette, 2018.

Appendix H

Timeline of important events in Tay Ho[53]

1128-1138	Ly dynasty (1128-1138): Tu Hoa's palace built. Now Kim Lien temple (1771).
1225-1400	Tran dynasty: Ham Nguyen's palace -> Tran Quoc temple
1600s	Dyke built to create Truc Bach lake out of West Lake for fish farming.
1800-2000	Traditional craft villages emerged in Tay Ho (Nguyen, 2009) Trich Sai (trading wood for consumption and trading); Toan Vien (garlic farming); Vong Thi (fishing village); Yen Phu, Nghi Tam, Nhat Tan, Ngoc Hoa (rice and flower farming); Thuy Khue (rice wine cooking); Buoi (paper making); Yen Thai (silk, weaving)
1890	French company built electronic tram factory in Thuy Khue village, often referred to as Thuy Khue electronic tram factory.
1900	The first main road to Bo Ho (Hoan Kiem Lake, central Hanoi) is built, called Thuy Khue, which cuts through Tay Ho.
1929	Yen Phu—Dong Lam intersection is built (now Dai Co Viet—Le Duan). Two out of total of four main roads go through Tay Ho (Tran, 2011).
1957	Thanh Nien Street (previously known as Co Ngu) is built.
1975	Thang Loi Hotel is constructed—biggest hotel in Northern Vietnam at the time, a gift by Fidel Castro when he visited Vietnam (Bach, 2015).
10/1995	Tay Ho district is founded. Total 2,042.7 hectares, 69,713 people, 8 wards: Bưởi, Thuỵ Khê, Yên Phụ (originally wards of Ba Dinh district), Tứ Liên, Nhật Tân, Quảng An, Xuân La, Phú Thượng (originally communes of Tu Liem district) (Vietnamese Government, 1995).
1988-1989	Foreigners started to move in, black market housing price surged (houses could still not legally be bought or sold), wealthier households moved in.
2000	Ho Tay Water Park was opened in Nhat Tan ward, of 8.1 hectares. It became a major entertainment site.
2000	New Sun Theme Park was opened, adjacent to the water park, of 2.9 hectares (The Word, 2016; Thanh, 2012).
19/2/2004	Opened Sen Ho Tay, a major restaurant of 12,000 m^2. (Sen Tay Ho, 2019).
2009	Opened Vine restaurant—among the first restaurants by/for foreigners in the area. Now surrounded by a strip of Western eateries on Quang An.
2010	Finished building Quang An, a waterfront strip… but in the past this was mostly gardens behind houses facing the water used by flower farmers, fishermen (referred to as circus performers in the past—'danh xiec') and silk craftmen. Road surrounding lake took 5 years to complete. Residents and landowners fought, but once they gave up the land for the road, property price went up three-fold. (The Word, 2016).
2006-2015	Nhat Tan bridge construction
2006-2012	Van Cao—Tay Ho Road project (Nguyen, 2010).
2013	West Lake Waste Water Treatment Factory started operation, capacity 22,800m3/day (Phu Dien Group, 2019).
2015	Completed Vo Chi Cong and Vo Nguyen Giap roads, connecting Noi Bai Airport, Nhat Tan bridge and Hoang Quoc Viet to become an administrative, financial and cultural centre of Northern Hanoi. Along Vo Chi Cong road, rice fields and ponds turned into restaurants and shops without permission (Ding, 2016).
4/2015	Ecolife—luxury, mix used complex on Vo Chi Cong scheduled to be completed in 2017.
2016	Thang Loi Hotel, formerly government-owned, turned into Hilton Hanoi Westlake
2016	D'. Le Roi Soleil high end apartment complex in Quang An, to be completed 2018 Sun Grand City—luxury apartment complex located at the old tram factory—currently 69B Thuy Khue—scheduled to be completed 2017-2018 Kosmo Tay Ho—luxury, mix used complex to be completed 2019

[53] Data compiled by Tran True Minh

Appendix I

Ethical issues and practices in the research

Unique context		
Issue	Montreal	Hanoi
Censorship	Little censorship	Censorship and consequences for political action
Degree of connection to researchers	Participants could easily find us through local community groups	Participants would have trouble contacting us
Literacy about research practices	Many participants had prior experience with research, though many may not be aware of how research findings are shared (e.g. dissertation, journal articles, public events, etc.)	Many participants did not have prior experience with research, and many may not be aware of how research findings are shared (e.g. dissertation, journal articles, public events, etc.)
Photography	Even though participants may request their stories to be shared and consent to having their pictures taken, photos now have the potential to circulate easily without people's control (e.g. through social media).	
Information technology	Because of advanced facial recognition technology, search engines, and social media identifying features, e.g. names and faces can be easily searched, acquaintances may be able to identify participants through social media	Identifying features, e.g. names and faces can be easily searched, acquaintances may be able to identify participants through social media. Vietnam's police state takes advantage of these tools to a greater extent, with greater possible negative consequences for participants.
Local authority	Civil society is embedded in community spaces and on-site observation often requires their consent.	Local authorities may shut down research and their involvement could endanger participants and highly skew findings.
Corresponding practices		
Data presentation and methods	Montreal	Hanoi
Names	All names of participants are pseudonymous	All names of participants are pseudonymous
Identifying features	All participants' identifying features (e.g. address, personal history that is easy to trace) are anonymised.	All participants' identifying features (e.g. address, personal history that is easy to trace) are anonymised.
Public organisations (e.g. NGOs, local state departments)	Kept identifiable, unless linked to a participant (e.g. staff of NGO or official at local state department was interviewed).	Kept identifiable, unless linked to a participant (e.g. staff of NGO or official at local state deparment was interviewed)
Photography	No faces of participants in photography unless explicitly requested by the participant, faces in public spaces were included though kept at a minimum.	No faces of participants in photography unless explicitly requested by the participant, faces in public spaces (e.g. passers-by) were included though kept at a minimum.
Semi-structured interviews	In cases of clear discomfort to share information, I respected participants' boundaries and did not include it in my findings.	In cases of clear discomfort to share information, I respected participants' boundaries and did not include it in my findings.
On-site observation	Before doing on-site observation in community spaces, connect with community group staff, explain research project	Interview residents individually without supervision of or contact with authorities, contact officials outside of official channels